

# World War II in British India

*By Hermann M. Selzer, M. D.*

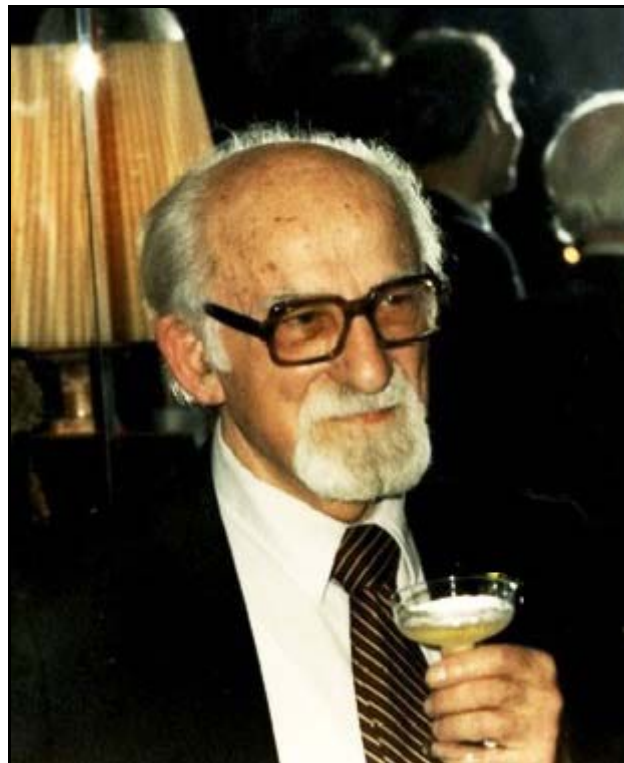
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## Biographical note

Hermann Marcus Selzer was born in Stryj (then Poland, now Stryi, Ukraine), in 1909 as the second of four children of Moshe Selzer and Deborah (born Spiegel). His father, an orthodox Jew, struggled to support the growing family. In 1914, the family moved to Oberhausen, an industrial town in the Ruhr valley. After finishing high school, Hermann enrolled at the medical school of the University of Cologne. In 1931, he transferred to the Medical Academy in Duesseldorf to begin his clinical training. Shortly before his final exams in 1933, he was arrested and incarcerated by the Nazis. Upon his release, Hermann Selzer left for Italy where by coincidence he again met Kate, whom he'd seen just once before in Berlin. They were married in Zurich in 1935. Both completed their medical degrees in at the University of Rome. As the situation for foreign Jews in Italy began to deteriorate, the couple decided to immigrate to India, then still under the British

rule. After brief stays in Palestine and Bombay, Kate and Hermann Selzer settled in Lahore, today in Pakistan, at that time a small provincial north-western town, where their two children Hazel (Pipsi), and Michael were born. The Selzers opened a medical practice and soon established professional and social contacts among officials of the British, Raj and local Muslims and Hindu residents of Lahore. In December 1940, the family was arrested and taken as enemy aliens to first Purandhar and then Satara internment camps in Southern India until August 1946, when they were released and returned to Lahore. Their practice once again prospered, thanks to their connections with leaders in politics, government, and the nobility. In addition, Hermann Selzer became an active Freemason and was appointed the District Grand Master of the Pakistan Masonic lodge. In 1971, Hermann and Kate Selzer decided to retire in Israel and the family left Lahore.



Dr. Hermann Selzer in Brooklyn, New York 1985

For the next ten years, he worked part-time in various clinics of the student health service. Kate, his wife, suffered from Alzheimer's disease and died in 1991. Hermann Selzer died on November 25, 2007, in Jerusalem. In the course of his life, Hermann Marcus Selzer had been a citizen of Poland, Germany, Pakistan and Israel, and, for five years, a person without citizenship. Although Yiddish and German were his native languages, he became more or less fluent in Italian, English, Urdu and Hebrew.

## The Clouds Are Collecting

This is the phrase writers usually use to indicate that war is approaching, that people are about to pass through periods of tension or that they begin to show the first signs of madness. I use here these words to tell you that we knew that we were in for a difficult time.

In 1939 we were spending our second summer in Kashmir. We felt happy there and were of the opinion that everybody knew of our status, knew that we could not and would not be identified with the Germans who had created conditions in the world which made one

feel the inevitability of a coming disaster. We had friends among the British residents and we believed that this was due in great part because they understood our position. We had also many friends among the native population - those who were residents and those who were visitors - who took a different posture: they thought they could please us with their admiration for all things German. We had quite a task to explain to this group our true opinion, our experiences, but I doubt if we did succeed in changing the attitude of even the educated classes.

There is no need to tell you about the state of affairs which prevailed all over the world in 1939; they were not very much different from the conditions which dominated life in India and Kashmir. Everybody had finally come to believe that war was inevitable, and when it was announced on September 1, 1939 that an important message of the Prime Minister of England was going to be broadcast, everyone of us assembled on the terrace of the Srinagar Club that afternoon was sure that this was going to be the official declaration of war. There we all sat, depressed and apprehensive, drinking our drinks. Everyone present knew the others present. Everyone considered the other his friend. When the word came through over the loudspeakers that England had declared war against Germany, all this changed. We, Kate and I, were suddenly no more the friends, the acquaintances or whatever categorization you may want to use. We were suddenly enemies of all those who sat with us on the terrace of the Srinagar Club. Even though most of them knew that we had Polish passports - we had so often in the past pointed this out to them - they saw in us now their enemies. From the chilliness suddenly to be felt, from the looks they gave us - was it hatred, was it embarrassment? one could interpret those looks as one wished - we were given to understand that we should leave the place. We returned home and next day I received a communication from the Secretary of the Club that it was "desirable that for the duration of the war" we should not make use of the Club premises. Of course, I sent at once my resignation.

Along with us there were at that moment some other 25 German Jewish refugees in Srinagar, most of them visitors who spent their vacation in Kashmir. Among them were the Moritz Neumanns, the Ede Rosenbaums, Ruth Muellerheim, Dr. Benjamin. All the males were arrested that very night but as there was only the Kashmir jail available for their internment, and this would have been the most unsuitable and at the same time the most degrading place - reflecting unfavourably on the white population, including the British, had the jail been used for these internees - these men were interned in the annex of the Nedou's Hotel. This solution was made possible by the offer of Willy Nedou, the owner of the hotel, whose Swiss ancestors had started the chain of hotels in Kashmir in the beginning of the 19th century. I very much appreciated this gesture of Willy Nedou and, when many years later he had lost all he had once owned and he lived in Lahore with his cousin Croal, I looked after them free of charge over many years.

As I had a Polish passport I was not interned, much to the chagrin of those who had been restricted inside the hotel annex.

It was a rather funny situation, a rather embarrassing situation for the British: they had to make the local population see that these were "enemy aliens", that these men were enemies, but at the same time they had to treat these same men as "sahibs" so that the natives would never overlook the dividing line.

Within a few days most of the internees were released, only the non-Jews and those who were in one way or the other suspect, were retained in custody and were soon sent off to a camp in India.

In early October we returned to the plains to start our "winter season" in Lahore. We found that things had changed in Lahore also. There was that martial air which you notice mostly when ex-military man, those in retirement and those far away from the fighting, are likely to exhibit; they were mostly imbued with a burning sense of duty and affected by a heavy dose of patriotism.

However, we ourselves did not encounter as much hostility as we had expected, because we were not yet classified as enemies, we were not yet enemy aliens. Still, the atmosphere was unpleasant in every aspect; the relaxed way of life had disappeared. The British Authorities were worried about the local population, the local politicians, the restless masses who expected that the war was going to be restricted again to Europe but would have sufficient impact on India to bring about considerable changes, possibly also freedom for the subcontinent.

It is an understatement if I say that I did not feel too happy. I was not as sure as I appeared that we were not going to be numbered among the "enemy aliens" soon, as we had in reality no passport at all. We were technically stateless. About a year and a half before the war the Polish Government had deprived us of our citizenship. I do not have to remind you that even in those days when Poland was in mortal danger and also later when it was bleeding to death, their leaders never missed the opportunity to harass and persecute their own Jews, as if Hitler was not doing enough for the Poles in this respect. The Polish Government had issued a decree that all those who had never lived in Poland, those who did not speak Polish, those who did not belong to the Polish cultural sphere but owned a Polish passport only due to the chance factor that they were born in territory which Poland had annexed after the first world war (or who now claimed to be Poles because they had never opted for Austria, or had more likely never bothered to do so, were to be deprived of their nationality and passports. This new law appeared to be tailor-made for us. The Consul General sent us a questionnaire which we did not know how to fill in except with the help of Kalisch, who not only had suddenly turned into a fervently nationalistic Pole, but who acted as if he was the local representative of the Fatherland. I am afraid that the assistance which Kalisch gave us in filling out these Polish questionnaires on our behalf were our undoing, as he answered the questions in a possibly straight way but by using phrases which we were later told caused quite some damage. He once hinted in his private reports to the Consul in Bombay that it was beyond his power to give a guarantee of my "bona fide" status as a Jew and as a refugee. These events and circumstances made us suddenly stateless - and helpless. I refused to return our passports, useless though they were now as they were our only means of identification. It is true that with the destruction of Poland, the Polish Government-in-Exile in London, in its desire to avoid any adverse publicity, did not apply any more the infamous decree which had deprived the "pseudo-Poles" of their nationality. (This did not call back to life Hermann Spiegel and his family who had not been admitted to Poland because of this law and who had to spend a winter in no-man's-land between Poland and Germany and, when they were at last admitted, ended in camp in Poland.) Thus, we could keep our passports, but they were not renewed when they expired. The Polish Consul even played at intervening on my behalf but I am certain that he did everything possible not to have us released from internment!).

Soon I noticed that we were kept under constant surveillance. A few of our friends, especially the Slattery (he was a high Government official, his wife a former Austrian, who understood well enough how liable we were to be misunderstood), informed us that certain interested parties did their best to insinuate that we were in truth enemy aliens

and possibly even Nazi agents. Our friends tried to persuade those in power that these hostile allegations were not justified - but without success.

In summer 1940, the war was still not taken too seriously. It was still called the "funny war". This was reflected also in the way officials in India adopted a relaxed and lax attitude to the war problems.

In May's we transferred our practice again to Kashmir, and we rented again the bungalow we had occupied in 1939. But things had changed; things were not the same anymore, and we were glad when we could return to Lahore. Yes, the Authorities allowed us to return to Lahore because we were not "enemy aliens", but Kate's parents, Ruth Muellerheim, Benjamin etc., the "enemy aliens", were not permitted to return to British India. They had to stay on in Kashmir and were never interned. We were allowed to return to Lahore and were interned.

It was a difficult journey back. Kate was pregnant. She had been looking forward to have her mother near her. Michael was born October 16, 1940, and though I felt already the hostile atmosphere crowding on us, I did not permit this or anything else to lower my pride, my self-esteem, my insistence on my rights. Let me give you an example:

I had registered Michael's birth in the Municipality but when I received the birth certificates I was surprised: I got the document that office used for their indigenous people, especially Hindus. Michael had been entered on the form as Michael Ivan (I had asked the Babu to enter Michael as Michael Ian, but the clerk had misunderstood me, he did apparently not know of Ians but had heard of Ivans), belonging to the caste of Beny Israeli and the sub caste Yehudi. I sent a protest note to the British Administrator (the Lahore Municipality for reasons I do not recall was run by such an official who had been appointed by the Government in place of the Mayor) and this man fully concurred that this was a barbaric misstep which I was justified in refusing to accept. The Administrator ordered at once that "neutral" certificates be printed, but for "technical reasons" it was impossible to make an Ian out of Ivan.

### When the Police came ...

By the time we had returned to Lahore and Michael was born, the war in Europe had ceased to be funny. Also in Lahore the war was now seen with more "respect". For weeks I noticed that the bungalow was surrounded and watched by day and night, that I was followed everywhere, that I was under surveillance. I am sure we would have been arrested and interned on our return from Kashmir had Kate not been pregnant and the British so kind hearted as to avoid the complication the arrest at such a stage was sure to have caused.

And it happened. It happened what I feared was going to happen, which I hoped somehow was not going to happen. It happened of all days on my birthday, December 5, 1940. In the early morning hours of that day, while I had my shower, Kate called me with the news that a posse of policemen stood outside on the verandah. They wanted to speak with me. When I was dressed, I went outside and came face to face with a Police Inspector who showed me a Government order addressed to the Chief of Police to the effect that Kate and I were to be arrested (let me not omit to point out that the order read: "Will you, please, arrest Dr. H. M. Selzer, his wife and their two children"), confined to the bungalow until we could be transferred that same evening to an Internment Camp near Bombay.

I told the policeman that it was impossible for us to leave that very same day, unless Government gave me in writing that they would be responsible for all the property I would have to abandon. I told him that I required at least another three days to complete my arrangements. As the Inspector could not grant me this permission, he took me to the Superintendent of Police, who appeared to have expected me and my request. He at once granted me the extension I had requested.

We were very busy during these three days, as you can imagine. While Kate began to pack with the help of the servants the minimum she thought necessary to take along, I had to run around, in the company of two policemen armed with guns, to find a storeroom for our furniture, our equipment and all the many things we did not want to take along. I did find at last a man who was ready to rent me his empty garage in which we could store our furniture and boxes, I might have found a more suitable and safer storeroom but many a potential leaser refused when they saw me accompanied by the police guard, and the Hindu garage owner who did agree, trebled the rent he would otherwise have asked, when he realized how helpless I was and how much in urgent need to find storage space for my furniture.

I went also to see Kalisch. He was the only one in those days who enjoyed seeing me in the company of the two policemen. I asked him to look after my patients in my absence. My request and the cause of my visit, though not as unexpected as he pretended it was, made him a happy man that day. Don't tell me that I paint Kalisch as black as I do on purpose or that I exaggerate. Kalisch threw up his arms into the air, jumped into the air at the same time (his acrobatic feat reminded me of that of Hitler when France surrendered). "Now I am the only foreign doctor in Lahore", he laughed. I am as a rule pleased if anything I do or is done to me, makes people happy, but this was not one of those occasions. We agreed that he would take over my practice, that he would pay for me all outstanding dues on my behalf and that he would pay me for the first year 50% of the income he might have from these my patients. (He sent me a copy of a letter he had printed and circulated among my patients in which he informed them that I had been interned and that he, Kalisch, was now replacing me). The arrangements did not last long. After four months or so he wrote to me that he could not be bothered anymore with this arrangement and he invited me to take any steps against him I might think myself entitled to.

For three days we had to live with the unpleasant situation. We camped among the boxes and cases. We were surrounded by some twenty policemen or soldiers with fixed bayonet. We had to tell patients turning up that we were not anymore in practice. We had to accept the kindness visiting Indian friends showed us during our confinement in the bungalow.

When the fourth day began, early in the morning, the Police Inspector who had been in charge, handed us over to his sergeant. We were driven in a police car to the railway station; a second car followed with six policemen carrying their guns and also four pairs of handcuffs and foot chains. We were accommodated in a large second-class compartment, along with the Ayah we had taken along, and the sergeant who came in uninvited, while the six policemen occupied the adjoining compartment. We left Lahore as prisoners of the British-Indian Government to be accommodated in the Internment Camp of Purandhar. The journey lasted 36 hours. All went off smoothly. None of us attempted to escape. It would have been difficult to attempt even such a feat, even without the guards, their guns, their handcuffs and chains. Pipsi was less than 2 years old and Michael just 6 weeks. Not the situation to play heroics and why? In any case,

Michael can boast that he must have been the youngest prisoner ever considered dangerous enough to such a degree that his guards had to be provided with chains and handcuffs to prevent any escape.

The Frontier Mail carried us to Bombay. During these 36 hours which the journey lasted the train stopped not more than six times. Every time the train came to a halt, the six policemen jumped from their compartment and surrounded the exit of ours in a half circle which permitted just enough space to walk 2 or 3 steps to the left and to the right, while it allowed at the same time the hundreds of people around us on the platform to gain an unrestricted view of us.

In Bombay a Police Inspector and his girlfriend awaited us and took charge of us. The Punjabi Police group had to return home; it must have caused them great disappointment. We were transshipped to another train and arrived late at night in Poona. We were at once taken from the station in a truck to the Internment Camp in Purandhar, an old Gujrati fortress very romantically situated at the top of a mountain. One was usually carried up that steep road in primitive chairs by coolies. Kate, the children, the ayah and the Police Inspector's girlfriend were carried up in such chairs, while I panted up the hill on my feet behind the Inspector. Only a hundred meters before we reached the gate of the Camp was the girlfriend made to vacate her chair, and I realized that the chair had been arranged for me but had been allocated by the Police Inspector to his girlfriend whom he wanted to show a camp housing white prisoners (I am sorry now as I was sorry then when the girl was not even allowed to enter the camp; she had to wait outside for more than an hour until the Inspector was free to go home again.) I was dog tired from the climb, but I was majestically carried into the Camp. That episode with Inspector and girlfriend showed me more than anything else how our status had changed and brought home to me that I had to adjust to a different life from then onwards.

The Commandant, Colonel Shah, was at the gate of the Camp to receive us. There were also many old acquaintances at the gate, notwithstanding the late hour, men and women we had known from "old" times, among them Ede Rosenbaum and his wife. I can assure you, they were truly glad and even happy to see us among them.

## Internment Camps

It is one of the accompaniments of power politics, including wars, that enemies of the country, of the nation or of the regime are "taken out of circulation", that they are restricted to an area - usually far away from the centres of activity - where they are kept under surveillance, and where their activities and their contacts are restricted.

The internment of aliens, enemies, unreliable individuals in times of war, is considered and accepted as a legitimate institution and regulated by international codes, conventions and agreements.

The Government of India was in no way acting against international law when she established internment camps and restricted the "enemy aliens" to live in these camps. It is also hardly a cause for blame that the government did not differentiate between Jews and Nazis as the British Government so successfully did. This may have been partly due to the inexperience of the officials in New Delhi or the provincial capitals, partly due to the fact that the government thought it had to be particularly careful and because it had to rely mainly on information it received from biased quarters. On principle, the

Government applied the rule that it was better to place a person into an internment camp than to take the slightest risk, especially as any other kind of policy would have required far more agents and detectives than were available - in view of the need of all such available and tried personnel to supervise the Indian politicians and agitators.

The policy of "taking no chances" and an internment camp in India being always preferable to a concentration camp in Germany or Poland, not only directed the policy of the Government of India but also that of the Jews in Bombay who had come to acquire great influence on the Government through the activities of the Jewish Relief Association. They made use of these camps to rid themselves of individuals who for one reason or the other had become a burden to them or who had aroused the enmity or suspicion of one other of the prominent Jews in Bombay or elsewhere. Much misery resulted from the reliance the authorities placed on the information supplied to them by the individuals who acted out of spite or for personal interest.

Is this anything unusual? Certainly not! This is a system, a condition, a side effect of the abuse of personal power and influence which occurs all over the world at all times. It is only bitter, it only hurts if one is personally affected, if one is at the receiving end of punishment and abuse, and if Jews have been responsible for the sufferings of other Jews.

What contributed so much to the injustice, to the suffering and the hurt was the fact that within this war, within this war effort, within British India and the British Empire the handful of Jewish refugees were of no importance, of no significance.

Jewish refugees protested, wrote, cried, shouted, but this made not the slightest impression in the prevailing vast disorder, the upheaval which World War II had caused in every sphere of life. At most they represented a nuisance value, a disturbing factor, an annoyance to some of the officials in Delhi - at least for a short while, but it did not bring forth any sympathy nor did it cause any persistent interest.

All over the world the internee as a rule accepts his fate. This was the standard attitude of an internee in war times. Only the Jewish refugees saw an injustice in their having been interned.

They protested that their rights had been violated. You can imagine how much displeasure this created in officialdom. However, these officials knew how to deal with this nuisance. They simply overlooked it, disregarded it. The official in question, sitting in his office in Delhi, may have spent an hour every week with this additional duty which had been crowded into his work schedule; he may have undertaken a yearly inspection tour of the camps mainly to get away from the dusty files in his office, but as a rule he left all the work, all the purely routine work to his clerks, the "babus".

Many a Jew was released from the camps and this appeared to be more a reflex reaction to the steady pressure that friends of this man or woman could exert, than to any thorough study of the case. Do not forget that the entire concept of the interments had also another aspect: this was the first time that Indian officials and babus dealt without control and supervision with Europeans, that white people more or less depended on their mercy! These Indian officials had always dealt with white people who were clearly their superiors, be it in India, be it at the time they were students at English universities. Here they had been given a powerful position, could deal with Europeans as they wished more or less. I had the feeling that such factors played a great role, also in my case.



Many an influential person agitated on my behalf, but none was successful in getting me released. This made me understand that the chains which kept us imprisoned, the reasons which made these efforts fail, were so strong, so powerful that they defeated anything attempted on our behalf. Not even the usual reaction of officialdom when faced with a bother, to get rid of it, applied here, i.e. to grant a release only for the sake of getting free of such a constant nuisance and at the same time to oblige some important person who might in turn one day prove useful. Most likely in our case the opposite appeared more important: to oblige a friend or a group of interests by keeping us inside the camp, to avoid any step which at a later stage might cause worries and annoyances should we have been allowed to leave the camp. Until this day I have not been told, neither officially nor privately what had been the cause of our internment, what the reason was for our not having been released like many others. We had to fall back on conjecture, console ourselves with rumours and suppositions. You will agree that had Government had a solid, foolproof case against us, they would have had no scruples to disclose these, they might even have taken stronger steps against me. All that I have said applies to the first 2 - 3 years of our internment only; later on, a very large factor which caused my being retained in the camp was my having annoyed, disturbed, irritated the individual who sat on our file.

Immediately after the war had started, "enemy aliens" were interned; however, those who were known as Jews, as refugees, as trustworthy and were not considered dangerous, were soon released. In summer 1940, the policy changed again with the changing political and military situation in Europe. Many of those who had been released, those who had no guarantors or who had no steady income or against whom the slightest suspicion or accusation had been raised, were again interned and their wives and children were this time arrested along with them. Originally, camps had been established all over the subcontinent, but in the course of that very first year the inmates of the many small camps were concentrated into larger camps: Purandhar was established as family camp for Jews and other anti-Nazis. In Satara, a much larger camp for families had been built, consisting of three wings: one for Jews and anti-Nazis, one for German Nazis and the third for Italian Fascists. The latter two camps were called Internment Camps while the one for anti-Nazis (like the one in Purandhar) was labelled "Interment and Parole Camp" (though I have never learned what the difference was with regard to the other camps, what advantages it brought to its inmates).

As I have indicated, Purandhar and Satara were also designated "Family Camps" but, again for reasons I cannot fathom, bachelors and spinsters were also sent there as internees, as well as women with their children whose husband and father was either considered too dangerous or otherwise unworthy of any special privilege and had been sent to the camp in Dehra Dun.

The camp in Dehra Dun was very large and harboured many thousands of men. They were Nazi civilians, prisoners of war, sailors arrested at the outbreak of war, and also Jewish refugees, disliked for reasons unknown to me and by them most likely too, by the people in power. Other internees and prisoners of war had been sent to India from most other countries in Asia that were at war with Germany and Japan, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the advancing Japanese. It is understandable that the camp was divided into many wings, and let it be said also here loud and clear that the wings harbouring the German Nazis had all the privileges, comforts and possibly also the power because the British Commandant, his officers and all the other officials employed in the camp, expected the Germans to win the war, and they wanted to make sure that they were going to get favourable treatment as soon as Hitler and his Nazis had taken

over the command in India. In Dehra Dun even the Italians, though they were despised by the Germans and no less by the British, received more than pleasant treatment, much more comfortable than prisoners of war usually expect, because they had built up a large underground distillery where they produced large quantities of alcohol which they transformed with the help of essences, rusty nails and old shoe soles into whiskey, brandy and gin, for which the Commandant had arranged outside the Camp a large and profitable sales organization.

The only wing which was made to feel the rigors of the life of a prisoner, internee, detainee (give them whatever label you like) was the Jewish wing which adjoined the Nazi wing.

The Jews were not only exposed to the usual and expected taunts and abuses of the Nazis, but also to the regularly recurring spectacle (at least until Stalingrad) of every German victory being celebrated with drinking, singing, bonfires. From time to time whenever a major Allied setback merited a special celebration, one of the barracks was set on fire. You will not be surprised to learn that the Jews and their barracks served very well for such acts of vandalism. Neither are you surprised I am sure, that no disciplinary action was ever taken against the Nazis in Dehra Dun. It was understood that whenever the Nazis celebrated (they learned of the German victories from the Commandant who invited them to listen to the German bulletins over his private radio), no Jews were allowed to disturb them - never mind the fact that the Jews had to pass the Nazi barracks whenever they wanted to visit the toilets.

All this changed the moment the string of German victories came to an end, the moment the world learned of the bloody lesson Hitler got at Stalingrad. The Nazis were suddenly subdued, the singing of Nazi songs ceased, and whenever they did feel like singing, the Nazis preferred the old folk songs their forefathers had sung, as children. The Italians suddenly turned into the worst enemies of the Germans and they behaved like heroes; they could only with difficulty be restrained to pay the Germans back for all the humiliations of the last four years. The British officers and officials began to look for alibis. They began to befriend the Jews, who believed they were dreaming. The Commandant had an inkling that he was not going to escape a court-martial after the war.

Suddenly the Jews after Stalingrad began to walk through the camp, even to the toilets with their heads lifted high, always with a smile on their face, even if they had abdominal cramps and diarrhoea. They discovered that they could again sing!

## Interment and Parole Camp Purandhar

Purandhar is an old Maharatta fortress, situated on a mountain top, some 25 miles from Poona. On a plateau about 50 meters below the fortress, barracks had been erected during and after the first World War to accommodate British soldiers, their officers and the families of the latter. However, the camp had remained empty for many years, and the fortress had become a historic relic, not fit anymore for the confinement of political prisoners.

When war broke out in 1939, the military camp was reorganized into an internment camp. I can understand that the authorities considered the place ideal for such a purpose, as it was far away from any major town, was completely isolated and easily guarded. The way the camp was administered and guarded looked to us like a joke, like

children playing at war. There had to, of course, be at least one daily rollcall. Visitors were rarely admitted and the peasants who lived in the valley and the coolies who were employed in the camp were not only warned to beware of all the possible ways in which the wily prisoners might abuse the hospitality of the British-Indian Government, but they were also assured of a very substantial reward should they be instrumental in frustrating any escape, any attempt at smuggling, any contact with enemies outside the camp. I am sorry to say that no peasant or coolie ever earned an anna in this way. We have to accept the monotonous fact that nobody ever attempted to escape, nobody even thought of escaping. Why? Tell me whereto could any of us ever escape? (Only in Dehra Dun did this happen, and only once. With justification much was made of the heroic deed of the two Germans who succeeded to escape over the Himalayas).

Purandhar Camp consisted of an administrative building, some twenty barracks, two large dining halls, a shop, a church, a hospital and the bungalow of the Commandant. Fifty meters above the Camp one saw the ruins of the fortress proper and only with the permission of the Commandant and in the company of a policeman were we able to visit the fortress. The reason for this restriction was the danger that we might sabotage the two large water cisterns which the heavy rains filled every summer and from where our annual requirements of water were satisfied.

There was never enough water to indulge in the pleasures which a sufficient water supply permits. Coolies brought every morning two large four-gallon tins of water to every family; one such tin had to suffice for a bachelor. The monotonously repeated circulars of the Commandant who advised to what purposes used water could still be applied, did not make the shortage less depressingly felt.

The scarcity of water was not the only burden. There were the monsoon months when the already disturbingly high humidity became excessive, reaching 98%, and clothes and shoes could become mildewed within 24 hours if they were not kept dry with the help of a hurricane lamp placed inside the closed wardrobe. A hurricane lamp had also to be placed underneath a bamboo frame on which we made valiant attempts to dry the dally washings - a problem of quite a magnitude for those who had to care for small children. Can you imagine how one's last reserve of patience and optimism disappeared when a hurricane lamp placed inside a cupboard started to smoke and when, by the time this was discovered next morning, an inch-thick layer of soot covered the clothing, the linen and all other things inside the cupboard?

Of course we had no electricity in Purandhar; there was none even in Satara although there at least the Commandant enjoyed this modern comfort. We used kerosene oil and had to make do with the quantity supplied to us at regular intervals for our hurricane lamps and the Potomac lamp we were allowed to use in special cases. When our children left the Internment Camp after 5½ years, they saw electric lights for the first time. They were very much impressed indeed by the minimal effort required to switch on a lamp, but after 2-3 days they had already accepted this new experience as a normal ingredient of their lives.

The Camp was ruled by Colonel Shah, a Muslim physician who belonged to the Indian Medical Service. I do not think he had ever practiced his profession: he appeared to have been advanced to senior rank mainly through the various administrative jobs he had occupied. This did not restrain him from giving us lectures on medical topics although their level was within the castor-oil-aspirin range. I suppose he had been initially appointed to our camp to serve as commandant as well as physician, but when It was

discovered that so many interned physicians were available from whom to choose, and that a full-time physician was required for the increasing size of the camp, the policy changed. We lost Colonel Shah after a few months. I do not think that, except for a few of his friends, the "supermen" of the camp whom I shall describe later on, many were sorry to see this westernized type of an official go, whose attempts to impress us with his Oxford accent, his alcoholic habits and his staggering gait did not hide his apprehension to impress the Europeans he had under his "command". It appears, however, that Shah was highly respected in the right quarters and his qualities appreciated. He was placed in charge of the jail in Poona in which Mahatma Gandhi had been imprisoned. Shah was replaced by a Mr. Holland, a retired Inspector-General of Police of whom there will be much to tell.

The Camp was guarded by police and not by the army. The Inspector, a certain Mr. Marshall, an Anglo-Indian, had been recalled from retirement; he mainly managed the office work. The poor man was in constant fear of his superior who looked down on him, in constant fear of losing his job which augmented so nicely his pension, and in constant fear of showing too clearly his sympathy for us prisoners who at least treated him in a decent way. The police contingent was supervised by Dalai, a sub-inspector; this Parsi police officer remained for most of the war in this post, while the sergeant of police was changed from time to time. Both these officers were regularly encouraged by Holland to "form friendship with the internees and to make them express their true feelings especially with regard to the Camp Authority", but they failed pitifully in their unusual task because they showed in their behaviour how much they disliked this part of their additional "duty".

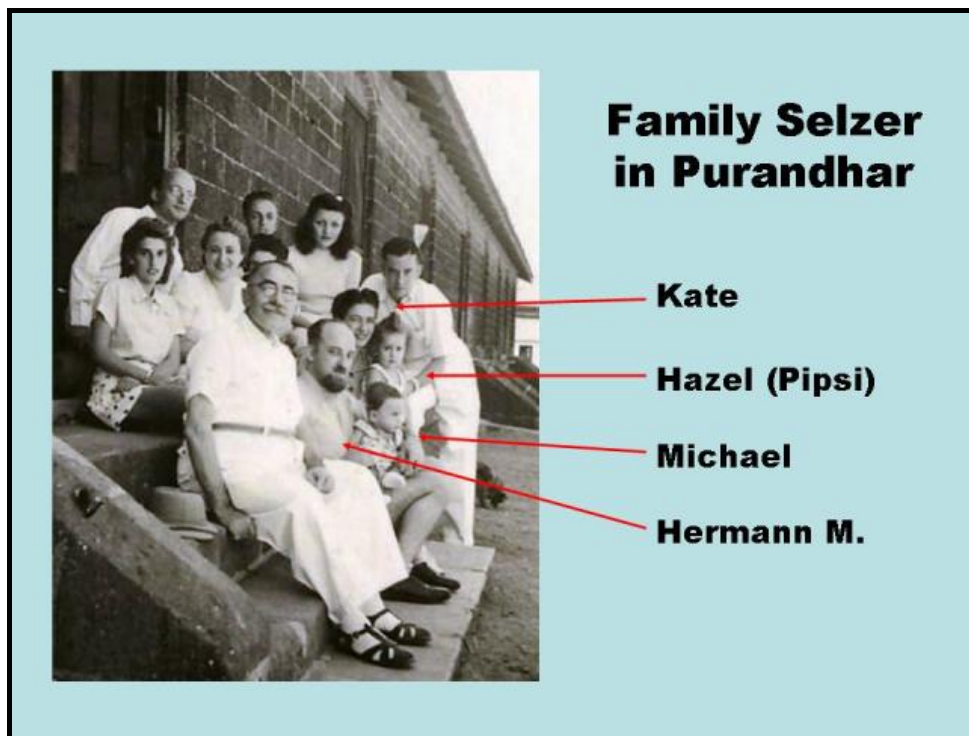
## Our life in Purandhar

I have no intention of writing the chronicles of this or any other "Internment and Parole Centre". There is in truth very little to tell, dear reader. The place was also called a "Family Camp" which will make you understand that families lived there though there were also many male and female singles, whose presence did not give at any time cause to Government to regret this initiative. All those who had initially been confined to this Camp had declared themselves anti-Nazis; in the case of the Jews this was something one did accept as "natural" but it was a very courageous step if taken by non-Jews at that time of the war when Germany was registering one victory after another. We accepted, therefore, without much scrutiny all the non-Jews who threw their lot in with us, and who by word and deed declared themselves not only enemies of Hitler but who also expressed their belief in his ultimate downfall.

Initially the British-Indian Government appears to have had the intention to make the stay of the anti-Nazi internees in the different camps all over the country as comfortable as possible, to allow the usually European internees an adequate status and standard of life. Already in the course of the first year this goodwill vanished and the camps and their inmates turned into a constant source of irritation, a nuisance at best. So many more important issues and problems came to the foreground to occupy the time and mind of the authorities that the entire question of the internment camps and of those confined therein was given very low priority. Only the critical eye of the International Red Cross, the fear of a possible retaliation by a victorious Germany, made the Indian Government maintain a certain level of interest from which the Nazi inmates profited mostly. Only in the final months of the war did Jewish organizations in England become interested in us Jews still confined to the internment camps in India and it was mainly the visit of Mr.

Silvermann, the English M.P. that induced the authorities to make some amends and some concessions.

Families were "accommodated" in the old barracks which had been divided into units consisting of 1 - 2 rooms to which a bathroom had been added. The few brick houses which had once housed the officer families at the time that British troops had been stationed in Purandhar, had been subdivided into 1 - 2 "flats" and allotted to families who had been lucky as first-comers or who had "found favour in the eyes of the camp-ruler". For the bachelors and the spinsters, single rooms had been provided in the barracks, and mostly two persons were made to occupy one room.



There was no clubhouse, but for a year or so one of the dining halls was used for social activities, until the generalized mood of depression, the growing tension between diverse cliques and finally the newly admitted Nazis made any further interest in any kind of communal or social activities no longer attractive.

There was also a small church. This was the only unit never used in the Camp. On a small elevation stood the administrative building from which the Commandant and his staff tried to rule the Camp - an easy undertaking as he had hardly ever to face any administrative or disciplinary problems of any magnitude. Those occurrences which did cause tension, unrest, muttering or ridicule were as a rule due to the ineptitude or the "imperialistic" posturing of the Commandant. It was not that the British official applied the methods and rules of a colonial system to us Europeans; it was not that the intellectual level of the prisoners was usually of such a degree that even the lower cadres were mentally and culturally superior to those who ruled and governed. It was the fundamentally abnormal attitude the Commandant had to his duties which caused most of the discontent and the troubles. He felt called upon, so it seemed to us, from the budget the Camp was granted to save as much money as possible for the war effort. He frowned upon excessive use of kerosene oil, medicaments, paper; he even issued orders that not more than one stamp should be fixed to our letters to the value prescribed and never smaller units to make up the postage of the letter. He ruled with the help of small slips of paper cut from old forms or circulars and always even here with the minimum of

paper. With the help of such paper slips he addressed the camp inmates in an unceasing flow of orders or comments. These slips were often the cause of much hilarity, and reactions of this kind to the august authority were eagerly reported back to Holland, who lived in a state of brooding and revengeful distrust.

In the beginning Government had provided for the maintenance of the internees the sum of Rs. 70.- for an adult and Rs. 35.- for a child per month. Only in very rare cases, e.g. whenever a person demanded the right to prepare a special diet, was the money handed over to the individual. More than 99% of the inmates received only Rs. 10.- from their allowance as their pocket money; the balance was handed over to a contractor who provided three meals a day. The cheap food prices of the first two years of the war and the not too generous amount and quality of the food he supplied for the money he received, guaranteed a very good income to the contractor - and also to the Commandant. Later on, when inflation eroded the value of the money and Government was slow to follow this trend with an increase in the allowances, the contractor terminated the contract and refused to continue with the supply of the meals. The entire allowance was now handed over to the internees and they had to try to feed themselves as best they could. When I confronted the contractor with my opinion that he was not justified in his claim that he could not continue feeding the camp inmates with the amount of money he received from the Commandant, and I proved to him that including all possible expenses, all the cost of food etc., there was still a profit margin of 20% for him, he looked at me with surprise as if he doubted my sanity and asked me, why I did not also calculate under the heading of expenses the 25% of the total the Commandant kept back as his share and the ten percent the policemen claimed as their due.

With the progress of the war our subsistence allowance was insufficient notwithstanding the increases we got from time to time and all of us had to face financial difficulties. Those of us who owned cameras, jewellery and other valuables had to dispose of them; others, less fortunate, had to be supported by the Jewish Relief Association in Bombay at the cost of much self respect. I still relive the happy sensation that we had because until the end we had no need to accept any financial handout from the Jewish Relief Agency (JRA) and if we were left without our cameras and some gold articles we had owned from before the war, this did in no way hurt us as an allowance from the Jews of Bombay would have done.

At the time of our arrival in Purandhar, food was still cheap and was, as I have described, supplied by a contractor appointed by the Commandant. The meals were served in two large dining halls, and these two dining halls represented also a social separation line within the Camp. It is a pity that I was anything but a detached onlooker and certainly not in the mood to analyze coolly with the help of purely psychological criteria the situation we found on our arrival. However, within a short time I had recovered my balance and I could watch and gauge the currents which were agitating the minds of the people and were determining the social structure of the Camp. I have today other things to do, which is a pity, as otherwise a more detailed study, a research in depth, about the psychology of the different types of the inmates - Jewish refugees of diverse backgrounds and education, all and sundry plagued by differently manifested urges for recognition and acceptance - would undoubtedly be interesting. As in every herd formation so also in Purandhar one man tried to take the lead, and he had at least partially succeeded. The interesting fact is that he applied psychological methods which I have never encountered before - not in fact because my experience of and in such situations is minimal, but also from what I had learned and what I knew from the literature: the fellow of whom I am talking presented himself as a man of a superior class; he had no reason or background

to do so, but he stated his superiority and others accepted it without objection. He formed a circle of lieutenants, followers, courtiers who felt honoured because he considered them worthy of his graceful acceptance. In the same frame of behaviour he condemned the remaining population as human beings of an inferior quality and he used unashamedly the Nazi classification of "Untermenschen" which his lieutenants followed with relish. It is, I think, significant that this man of whom I speak, Fritz Thalmessinger, was only a half-Jew and in his action and behaviour showed a kind of mentality which would have best fitted with a Nazi uniform. I am sure that his fantasies expressed his desire to wear such a uniform. Thalmessinger had the ear of the Commandant, Colonel Shah, - and for sometime also that of his successor Holland, mainly because he was so effective in supporting their ego which at times needed support, especially whenever they contemplated their task, their duty to load it over masses of Europeans - an experience they had never known before but which became tolerable and manageable when they heard Thalmessinger classify these "Untermenschen" as unworthy of the respect usually due to white people.

Thalmessinger, who played the role of "Chief Inmate", had studied law in Germany for a few semesters; he had left Germany in time when he felt that he was no more welcome there as a half Jew. He joined his older brother, who had been living since many years in Cawnpore. At the outbreak of the war he was interned because he had made sure that nobody identified with other Jewish refugees and that he did not like Jews. In Purandhar he behaved like a Pasha, appointed his favourites, also his favourite woman who remained attached to him mainly because the jealousy shown by the other women made her position appear an enviable one.

Thalmessinger was in a rather difficult position vis-a-vis us. He knew us well enough, not only from Ede Rosenbaum who fawned on him and who showed how honoured he was to belong to his court, but also from other inmates who had known us in the past. He knew us because his brother Max had been a good friend of ours; he had visited us many a time in Lahore and Kashmir before our internment. (Max Thalmessinger, although he was paralyzed below his hips by polio, was a very active man, constantly travelling about the country for his business: he bought animal hides and skins all over Northern India for a large company in Europe). This fact, our friendship with Max, made it difficult for Fritz to apply his usual attitude; also to us. He could not apply his usual categorization nor could he dominate us as he did others. Even when we showed him that we did not appreciate him in any way, did he ever extend his intrigues or diatribes to us. In short, of this man a sordid but also an interesting chapter could be written. (To complete the "story": Thalmessinger was released after some time because his brother could mobilize the right kind of friends. We met him again when his brother was very ill and I was called twice to Cawnpore to attend to him. And once we met in 1953 by chance, on the steamer taking us from Calais to Dover, and we found during the intervals when sea-sickness made clear thinking not too difficult that we still had nothing in common.

A sociologically very interesting development was the designation of those who ate in the "Upper Dining room", the domain of Thalmessinger, the superior element in the class structure of Purandhar, while the "Lower Diningroom" was considered the reserve of the "plebs". On our arrival we were given seats in the less crowded "Lower Dining room" but as our barrack immediately adjoined the upper dining hall, we arranged after a few days to take our meals there (because in the monsoon weather walking the additional 50 meters to the lower dining hall became an ordeal for the children.) However, we made it clear that this change did not indicate that we had joined the "Thalmessinger Party". This

declaration came easily as just that week the new camp leader had to be elected and as the Rosenbaums, who still ate in the lower dining hall had openly declared that they were going to vote for Thalmessinger, and as only two votes for Thalmessinger were found among the more than 120 votes cast in the lower dining room, all of them for Zuckerbaecker, the fact that we were shifting to the upper dining hall was accepted as a purely technical adjustment and not as an expression of allegiance to the "Upper Dining room". Do not laugh about the pettiness of all this. These were extremely important matters in the life of the camp inmates.

There were many nice people in Purandhar, and there were many others you could not have cared to meet outside, or did not have to meet the latter kind of people even "inside", you did not have to be bothered by them and you could form your own circle, or you could join a social group more to your liking. It did happen that over the 2½ years we spent in Purandhar there were many people with whom we hardly exchanged more than the time of the day. This division became the more marked when the Commandant in his zeal and applying his concept of "divide et impera" which he must have remembered from his school days, could induce the Government of India to have a sufficient number of Nazis and their families transferred to our Camp so that the size of the camp was more or less doubled. We understood the reasons for this move and we senior inhabitants met with representatives of the Nazi group and we agreed that we were going to foil the game of the Commandant and would try to prevent any clashes between our two groups; that we were going to settle any dispute which might arise among ourselves and that we would do our best to restrain the hotheads among us from creating that kind of trouble which Holland had apparently hoped to provoke. We succeeded very well in this program to the chagrin of our Commandant.

We found a few very good friends among the people in Purandhar. Foremost among them I count the Zuckerbaeckers from Vienna. He was an engineer specialized in paper production and his wife Bertha, who was "Auntie Zuckerbaecker" to all of us, proved to be a strong support for Kate. I do not know how Kate would have coped with the situation without Bertha Zuckerbaecker's help. After the war the Zuckerbaeckers visited us in Kashmir, but after that we never saw them again. We remained, of course, in constant correspondence. They both died in the early 1950s somewhere in India.

I shall mention at other occasions other people we knew in the camp, but there were not many who made a dent in our lives.

In the first year concerts were regularly organized by those who played one instrument or the other, but even the depressing atmosphere of the Camp could not compensate for the quality of the players. There were regular lectures by one or the other of the inmates who talked about their specialties. There were also "social parties", entertainments of many a kind, in short all the happenings which the commandant of a camp and a camp committee will strive to organize in order to "improve the morale" of the camp. All this however, subsided slowly but definitely. A cloud of depression settled over the Camp, caused not only by the unhappy atmosphere, by the dampness and by the financial worries but above all by the news from the war fronts. This despondent mood was interrupted only for a few days when we learned that Hitler had invaded Russia, as we all considered this adventure evidence of that megalomania which we hoped would one day destroy the Nazi machine. Thalmessinger here was above all the depression all of us felt increasingly because the camp was managed in a way which destroyed human dignity and this was compounded by the certainty that we, our fate, our existence were of no interest to anybody "outside".



By the time the third year of the war had started, all our hope had disappeared. Also that sense of a common fate which had motivated us for so long had begun to fade. The formerly nourished expectation that sooner or later the "outside world" would have to understand our particular, our exceptional position, had vanished. If there had been initially a unity, a oneness which even the internecine fights and feuds could not destroy, this feeling had gone away, had ceded to a sense of depression and bitterness. Life became more and more difficult, for some even unbearable, and this unhappiness grew still more when in the course of the years large numbers of our people were released and we had to stay behind. Friendships, however, once formed tended to deepen whenever at least one partner showed in particular times of stress the strength which unselfishness conveys. Those who guarded us, those who governed us, those who were outside and had from time to time expressed sympathy for us, had shown interest in us, had sent some occasional gift for the children; began to lose interest in us. I cannot say now, if they were bored, or if they thought it not worth their while to act against the signs and indications emanating from the gods of war. This depression, this surfeit of disappointments were compounded by the awareness that the Commandant had succeeded in planting spies in our midst, had won over some of our own people to act as stool pidgeons. At last he did succeed in causing friction and dissension in the Camp.

## The Commandant

The first Commandant we met on our arrival in Purandhar, Colonel Shah, I.M.S., was after some months sent to Poona there to act as Chief Warden of the jail in which Mahatma Gandhi had been, confined by the British. In his stead came Mr. Holland. He had been a high police officer, an Inspector-General of Police, but he had been prematurely retired. One of the many reasons given why this man had been sent into pension at the age of 50 - according to one of the many rumours one heard - was that he had married an Anglo-Indian girl. Such a liaison between a high British official and a woman of mixed blood was before the war a sin which the Establishment could not tolerate.

Maybe he was considered the right man; maybe there was no other job available for a man of his seniority; maybe due to his former sins he could not be trusted with any other duty. Whatever the reason, Holland was recalled from his retirement and given the command of our Camp. In the first few weeks he appeared rather bewildered. He had never faced a similar situation, but he soon learned to find his way. The right way for him to run the camp was for him to forget that we were anti-Nazis or Jews or white people but a great nuisance and a great expense to the government. He was a very sensitive man only in one respect: he insisted that his wife be given the honour and respect due to her position, and as we were mostly Europeans and were not affected by the prejudices a good Britisher is supposed to possess, this was not a difficult issue. We had a few British internees and also some Anglo-Indian girls among us, and it was interesting to observe the interplay of these individuals with Holland. He expected the British to be true representatives of the Empire even when interned as potential enemies, and he did not allow the Anglo-Indians, most of whom were married or otherwise associated with Europeans (mainly Jews), to pretend that they were on equal footing with his wife.

Mrs. Holland was, unfortunately, a stupid and uneducated woman. Whenever she tried to assert herself and wanted to appear more British than was expected from her, she produced reactions which produced their hilarious effects for the people of the Camp.

The stories which began to circulate about the Hollands (this was an unpleasant and unnecessary trend of our people and aggravated an already difficult situation; but our people in the camp could not be accused at times of even the minimum degree of acceptable sensitivity). All this created a situation which she and her husband interpreted as expressions of disrespect for her because she was an Anglo-Indian. Be it stated here to our shame that there were Jews - I recall mainly a Roumanian Jewish couple, also the Bergers a mixed couple, and also Mohammad Asad - who enjoyed to report back at times even with unnecessary elaboration, adverse remarks someone or the other may have been made in the Camp about the Hollands.

Initially the Hollands were accepted as people who tried to make our life as easy as possible, and they made friends with our people here and there as far as circumstances permitted, but this friendly relationship deteriorated not only because they were like all of us affected by the changed mood in the Camp, to which he reacted by trying to tighten discipline in the Camp which did not require tightening, but because Holland had come to the conclusion that it would be more conducive to good government and to being respected, if they were more exclusive in their intercourse with the inmates of the Camp. They reacted harshly against the many petty difficulties which are to be expected in a camp of this kind, which the growing atmosphere of despondency and of depression and anger is bound to increase. They reacted in the way small-minded people as a rule will react: they exhibited all at once a vein of spiteful anti-Semitism which in that set-up was rather ludicrous behaviour. Holland succeeded also in having a number of Nazis added to our supposedly "Anti-Nazi Camp". If he had hoped for clashes now and then between us and them, if he had expected that his position would be enhanced and that he was going to play the powerful arbiter, he was going to be disappointed.

We, i.e. Kate and I, appeared to have been initially on his list of preferred prisoners. I do not think he loved or admired us, but he certainly considered us worthy of a certain respect. We arranged in our "flat" one a week gramophone concerts in which we tried to achieve with two gramophones an uninterrupted effect with the 33-speed records then available. Among the 12 to 15 guests who came to these evenings you could always find the Hollands. Then some estrangement occurred. It appears that at last the gossipmongers had scored. I do not deny that we made among ourselves occasionally remarks about the Hollands which they could not have liked, but even without such remarks which I do not deny having made, many must have been in addition invented and reported back to Holland. We discovered, albeit too late, that the wall which separated our flat from that of our neighbours, was only a thin wooden partition and that everything which was said on our side could be heard next door. I was at that time the Medical Officer of the Camp and it was by virtue of this office that we occupied half of one the brick-built officer houses. We never understood why the other half had been allotted to the childless Rumanian couple for whom none of the usual preconditions for such a preferred treatment existed. Only too late did we realize that this was the payment for faithful spying services.

I also made mistakes in a different aspect. I had been on different occasions permitted to go to Bombay to see some of my former patients who had called for my professional services: the Maharanis of Baroda, of Cooch Behar and of Dewas junior. I had also on two occasions to go to Bombay to see the American Consulate. From every such trip to Bombay I brought back some presents - and never did I dream that it was expected from me that Mrs. Holland had also to be on the list of those for whom I had to bring presents every time. I was of the opinion that "this was not done" that it would be offensive, that it could be misinterpreted. Only too late did I realize that Holland belonged to that category

of policemen who considered such attentions their due. How do I know that this was the case, you will ask? Not only did Mrs. Holland express her disappointment that I had never brought her a present but when I had an argument with the Parsi contractor who had catered for the camp and had suddenly announced that he would not continue to do so as he was losing money in this business, I could prove to him that he could very well continue to supply the meals for the Camp as from our calculations he had to make a profit of at least 20%. The man looked at me full of surprise and demanded to know why I had not included into my calculations the 25% of the total which he had to hand over every month to the Commandant.

I am sure that much of the fault for our ensuing estrangement from the Hollands, for their final hatred, for our ensuing difficulties and persecution and finally for our transfer to the Satara Camp, was due to my weakness to talk too much, to make deprecatory remarks, to crack jokes, to make allusions about the Hollands which a couple as they had every reason to resent. It is difficult to otherwise explain the developments. Of course, there were the activities of his spies, of his stool pigeons to be appreciated. There were other mischief mongers who worked for the Commandant. I knew this. We all knew this. But I was never careful enough. Never did I apply the necessary caution which that environment of idle, jealous, petty-minded, unhappy people should have made me adopt.

I am sure we would have been saved much unpleasantness, had I not ruined my position with the Hollands. They were our Karma. Who knows how things might have shaped otherwise? Perhaps it was to our advantage, it was best for us, perhaps it all happened, had to happen in conformity with a destiny I do not yet perceive in full. If so, I had to do what I did?

## Religious life in Purandhar

Of course, I mean Jewish religious activities. There were Christians aplenty in our Camp, but as far as I can remember there was never a Christian religious service of any kind, and the neat small church they could have used for prayers, christening or confirmation services, stood always empty.

But the Jews, religiously inclined elderly people tried to organize some kind of religious life, some "Jewish life" in the Camp. They were, however, the uneducated Jewish types who murmured their prayers, followed certain stereotyped rites or rituals without in reality knowing what they did. We did not have any theologically educated people, men or women, who could have given us spiritual guidance, could have given us instructions in religion, philosophy or even history. We all felt the need to express the fact that we were Jews, that we were in a peculiar situation as Jews and that our personal destiny was microcosmically in some way a replica of Jewish destiny in general.

In the first two years we spent in Purandhar we organized a Pessach Seder and prayer meetings for the High Holidays. As I have already mentioned, we had no Rabbi among us and there was also no purpose (and let me state here quite clearly did anybody ever think of doing so) to ask for such a man to visit us for such religious occasions from outside. We did, however, get from the JRA in Bombay a dozen or so prayer books for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

As there was nobody else who considered himself capable of managing the religious services, I took over the duties and functions of a religious leader and I am sure that all present agreed that everything went off well and in an impressive way, although purists

may have objected to many of the things which happened during the prayers or the Seders. We organized the Seders as a kind of happening around the banquet table; we associated past and present as a painful reminder and a hopeful indication, but we did in no way underline the negative factors to such a degree as to spoil the festive mood. We did not ask the charitable Jews of Bombay to send us matzoth as the chapattis, the kind of local bread the local population eats regularly, was more typical of the kind of unleavened bread our forefathers prepared when they left Egypt in a hurry than the machine-made factory-produced squares and circles we consume today everywhere. On Rosh Hashana and on Kippur I was again the Chasan or Rebbe or whatever you might call it and I can assure you it was a "good service", manifold better than some I have witnessed since.

However, this custom was not continued afterwards, neither in Purandhar nor in Satara. "People could not be bothered", was the explanation.

There was also a sad occasion when I functioned again as the "Camp Rabbi". Among our inmates were the three brothers Geduldig and their mother. They were simple - you may even say primitive - but decent people and they never gave any trouble to anybody. They had been interned by the authorities on the advice of the Judenrat in Bombay who could not find suitable jobs for the boys and by having placed them in the Camp the JRA could wash their hands of people who had become a burden. When old Mrs. Geduldig died of a pulmonary embolism, the question arose, how and where to give her funeral. I advised the boys and the Commandant that from a religious point of view we could perform the burial in Purandhar. Holland generously granted a small plot of land to be used as a cemetery. Mrs. Geduldig had a very dignified funeral. Of course the entire Camp, about 350 people followed the coffin. Our contingent of policemen stood at intervals along the route the procession took and presented arms when the coffin passed. The Commandant - who had donned his full uniform and waited with his wife, as advised by me, in front of his office - joined the cortege when we passed the administrative building. I said the prayers at the grave, Zuckerbaecker made an appropriate little speech, the three Geduldig boys said Kadish. Then we dispersed. During the following weeks the Commandant had a wall erected around the plot, the three boys with the help of Zuckerbaecker succeeded in making the small cemetery appear respectable. Zuckerbaecker designed an iron gate for the cemetery. These gates manufactured in Bombay and donated by those who had been material in having the Geduldigs interned, arrived in due course and were installed by our people.

There were fortunately no other deaths in the Camp (except for a baby whose Christian mother preferred to have it interred in Poena). I do not know what happened to the cemetery since.

## People we met in Purandhar

Let me again say a few words about Hans and Bertha Zuckerbaecker, with whom we were such good friends. He was a Viennese engineer specialized in paper production, a man of great intelligence and integrity. He was respected by all. His wife, a Christian, was an equally valuable person and I cannot imagine how Kate could have carried through the first years of internment without the maternal support of "Auntie Zuckerbaecker". When they were released, Hans found again suitable employment in the southern part of India, but from his letters it appeared to me that his capabilities were never fully appreciated by his employers. After the war, in 1947, they spent a summer with us in Srinagar. Following Partition, further personal contact became impossible.

Bertha died soon afterwards and Hans survived her only for a short time. They had a daughter in England, but we never met her.

Then there were Rudi and Hilde Weiner. Also in this case the woman was Christian and by far the more valuable partner. He had been a dentist in Calcutta and from all accounts he was a very good dentist. At times it was difficult to get along with him, but our friendship, though strained at times, never suffered, even when he fell in love with a young woman in the camp, a Mrs. Dember, 30 years his junior, and became the focus of much attention, laughter and pity, especially from the moment when the clumsy Commandant felt called upon to act the moral judge. The "love affair" evaporated after some time and Rudi came to his senses. After the war they retired to Freiburg in Germany where he practiced his profession for a few years. We visited the Weiners in 1971 and have been in correspondence with them since. He is now over 80 and his age has considerably handicapped him. Also Hilde's health is not too good.

Among our friends were also the Brockes. Dr. [Alfred Brocke](#) had been the representative of Bayer in India. He had been a well-known and respected citizen of Calcutta where he ultimately was elected president of the prestigious Bengal Club, a great honour for a foreigner. He never hid his negative opinion about the Nazi Government and this was the reason that he was never separated from his family as many other Germans at the time of their internment. We lost contact with the Brockes after our transfer to Satara Camp and when they returned to Germany. In 1971 we visited them also in Munich and it was a pleasant and happy reunion. We learned soon thereafter that he had died. I am glad we saw each other before it was too late.

There were so many men and women about whom I could write volumes, be it simple sketches be it larger constructions where facts are joined by the cement of fantasy. But I won't indulge in this kind of reporting now: it is too late to start and I am in a hurry to complete my task.

But let me mention the Dembers, Fritz and Marion and his mother. I have the suspicion that Philip Roth knew the Dembers, that he used Fritz and his mother as prototypes for his Fortney ménage. The girl was conscious of her charms and had many a liaison with men, married and single, in the camps. Her transfer to Satara did not change her activities, only the environment and her technique. I have no doubt in my mind that she adopted this promiscuous, provocative and at times nauseating way of behaviour purely and only to annoy her mother-in-law and to punish her husband. I learned recently that mother and son have joined their forefathers in the beyond, but that Marion is still around and "doing well" somewhere in Australia.

Let me tell you also about poor Dr. Laser, a physician who lived with wife and two children in a somewhat isolated part off the camp. I call him "poor" because if you ever want to have a picture of a fool worthy of pity more than of condemnation, Laser is your man. He was a Jew, his wife a Nazi. She insisted that her husband avoid any contact with the Jews in the Camp and she had the impertinence to tell me - and I learned also many others - that she prayed regularly for Hitler's early victory as her two brothers in Germany were high ranking Nazi officials who had promised her that her circumcised husband would be "acceptable" once Germany had taken over the domination of the world. I am not surprised, therefore, that she was impatient to return home as soon as possible to her brown environment. They did return in the end to a defeated Germany. We learned that soon after his return Laser had died. He was a relatively young man of 40. Poor man! Did he die of a "broken heart"?

I had hardly any contact with this man - never with his wife. He presided over the dispensary and handled the distribution of the medicines when I was the Medical Officer; he assisted me also at times with his superior knowledge in obstetrics whenever this was necessary. For a short time we also formed a philatelic contact until I found that in this case at least his superior knowledge did not conform with that minimum of honesty which would have made such contacts pleasurable. Unfortunately he became my enemy when his wife was pregnant with their third child. He requested that I supply him with a catheter. He refused the glass catheter which I had available and he demanded a silver catheter. I refused to ask Holland that he order such a catheter for Laser. Laser sent an official complaint about me to the government via the Commandant; the reply came "through official channels" that silver catheters were items used in times of peace, that those made of glass were used in times of war. I still feel sorry for this man who put so much trust in his wife. I still see him slouch with bent back through the camp, a figure Streicher might have liked to picture in his "DER STUERMER".

Somehow we formed a small circle of three friends. We met once a week in our "flat" to discuss over a (self-brewed) drink or a cup of tea, matters which had nothing to do with the Camp or its inhabitants, nothing with the intrigues around us or the war we had to live with. We met every Thursday, discussed whatever came into our mind. We never solved any of the metaphysical problems we touched, it is true, but we felt recharged in our belief that the petty nuisances and annoyances of every day camp life, of the Commandant, of the people around us, could not reduce us in our being humans. We have often wondered what has become of them all. We knew that Paulssen - he had been a Junkersengineer building hangars in Indonesia before the war - had settled in Delhi where he died. Paulssen's wife was Jewish (she remained in Germany) but Paulssen never revealed this to his friends; we learned of this fact only later on from his son who lived for many years in Lahore as the representative of Thalmessinger's hide purchasing business, until he was killed in an airplane accident not far from Lahore. We never knew what has become of Kirschner, also a Christian, a tobacco planter from Sumatra, after he was released. But we came to know that the third man, Grossmann, a salesman for Salamander Shoes, had reached Israel after his discharge from the Camp, that he had left Israel again eight years later, after having been involved actively in the War of 1948 to settle in Hamburg, because the grass was greener there and business more promising. We learned about him and his fate from him in person when one day in 1978 he turned up in Jerusalem. He had been told about our whereabouts by the Weiners. But apparently neither of us felt the urge to renew our friendship.

## Dember's Indian Rope Trick

The name of Fritz Dember might sound familiar to you. I have already mentioned somewhere that he had been made to join the Internment Camp of Purandhar in the company of his mother and wife. I have already hinted that mother and son lived in a kind of Portnoy symbiosis, and it should not surprise you that the young wife did her utmost to pay back to him and his mother all the humiliation she must have undergone before she was thrown into the company of so many men - young and old, bachelors and married men - who were ready and willing to rush into the arms this young and attractive woman appeared to keep open to all comers. Don't get me wrong: she was neither a prostitute nor a nymphomaniac. I would not be surprised should she have been frigid. She was a flirt all right and her tendency to flirt was reinforced and perpetuated by the ease with which she attracted men in the camp. Her primary interest was, apparently, to annoy her husband and to humiliate her mother-in-law, and she succeeded only too well

in both, especially as her husband appeared to find masochistic pleasure in this situation and refused to arrange for a divorce his mother never ceased to suggest.

However, I do not want to describe here the family life and the sexual activities of the Dembers. I want to tell you about the business activities which had made our Fritz famous in the South of India. He had been a businessman in Germany before he settled in Madras - but I do not recall what kind of business he had nor do I think it is relevant here. In Madras, however, he turned into a special kind of businessman and he had quite a reputation among the women of South India, rich and poor, whose main desire was to produce a male heir.

You must realize that in India it is a disaster to be barren; she is likely to be sent back to her family or to be reduced to the status of a servant by the other wife or wives that the disillusioned husband - be he even the poorest labourer - is going to bring into the house. (We are surprised about such a barbarous custom, but do recall that also the Shah of Iran divorced two of his wives before he found a third who presented him with an heir. Of course, these divorced empresses lived more or less happily thereafter, and in this case the Shah was definitely not the cause of a sterile marriage as in so many cases where the woman is blamed).

However, to get pregnant and to produce a child is not enough; only a woman who produces a son is assured of an honourable and honoured position in the family and only she can look forward to a secured and comfortable life in her old age. A woman who produces only daughters is treated like the one who is barren. Girls did not count in the past and do not count even today in that part of the world as you might have already learned from your reading. You may also have heard that the dislike for female children in the primitive Indian society found expression in the same methods which were used and applied in many other parts of Asia and Africa: the useless infant girls were simply neglected if they were not outright killed.

A son, however, counted as a blessing for the parents. He was the pride of his mother and the guarantee for her secured life. No wonder, therefore, that so many women who wanted to bear a son, flocked to the office of the white man who, though he did not call himself a doctor, possessed a potent medicine in form of white powders packed in red paper, which guaranteed that the child a pregnant woman bore in her womb was going to be a son. Let me underline that this white man, Dember Sahib, was far too honest a person to claim that his powders could help make a sterile woman conceive. No, this he could not do - this was a matter the doctors and priests had to arrange; but he assured that the anxious woman that his medicine could change the sex of the child in her womb so that a male child was going to be born at the end of her gestation. Yes, this his medicine could do, provided the woman fulfilled certain conditions and followed certain rules without which the medicine did not work. There were many such conditions and rules and I am going to mention only the important ones, that the woman had to be pregnant not less than three and not more than five months, that she was not to bargain about the price of the medicine as this would annoy and render useless that very medicine. Furthermore the woman had to wake up every night for three nights, had to walk for an hour along the bank of the nearest river, lake or brook; that she had to carry a phallus of clay or wood in her right hand during this walk and that she had to concentrate her thoughts exclusively on the son she was to produce. After the peregrinations had ended she had to swallow the powder with the help of a cup of water from the river, brook or lake nearby. Another very important condition was that on the day following the

ceremonies the woman had to consume the lower half of a roasted cock or rooster inhaling all the time the smoke of a fire made from cow dung.

I have not to tell you that Dember Sahib had in a short time built up quite a good practice. Women of all classes and ages flocked to his house and they all paid the stiff price he demanded. They paid without demurring. At times they paid even more than the Rs. 300.- for the three powders; this happened when the woman had already passed the normal limit of five months during which the powders were most effective. In such cases Dember Sahib was ready, albeit, reluctantly, to supply three powders packed in green paper which he promised helped also during the sixth and seventh month of pregnancy in the same way and with the same rules as the red-packed powders.

The important point, you must understand, for so much confidence the women had in Dember Sahib, was his promise that with the help of the red- or green-wrapped powders the women would "bring forth a male issue". What else can you expect? Where else can you get such a cast-iron guarantee?

The women came to Dember Sahib's bungalow and bought his medicines. Also the poorer women came and paid the Rs. 300.- for three powders. They paid the full price demanded and never bargained; and when the jewellery, the cow and other possessions they had sold did not suffice to make up this sum, there was always the Hindu moneylender in the village. All the women who conscientiously fulfilled all the prescribed rules and conditions were jubilant when their son was born, and they praised Dember Sahib and wished him many sons too. But there were also many women who brought instead a girl into this cruel world. They came to complain to Dember Sahib, who could in every case prove that the woman had violated treatment and had thereby one or the other of the main rules had annulled the effect of the medicine. To prove to you and all of us what a good-hearted fellow, what a gentleman Dember Sahib was, let me confide in you that in every case where his medicine failed, he refunded without any further discussion the money in full. ...

## The children in Purandhar

When we arrived in Purandhar Pipsi was less than two years old and Michael only seven weeks. Undoubtedly they noticed the change, the difference, the novelty, mainly from a negative aspect, especially as we, Kate and I, were in no way sufficiently at peace with ourselves and our environment, had not yet cooled down, had not yet resigned ourselves into a balanced state of mind. We had been given permission to take the "Ayah" with us from Lahore to the camp and she proved of great help to us all. Unfortunately, after ten days she was asked to leave and although this order of the Commandant may appear to you cruel, I think it very unlikely that we could have induced her to stay any longer with us.

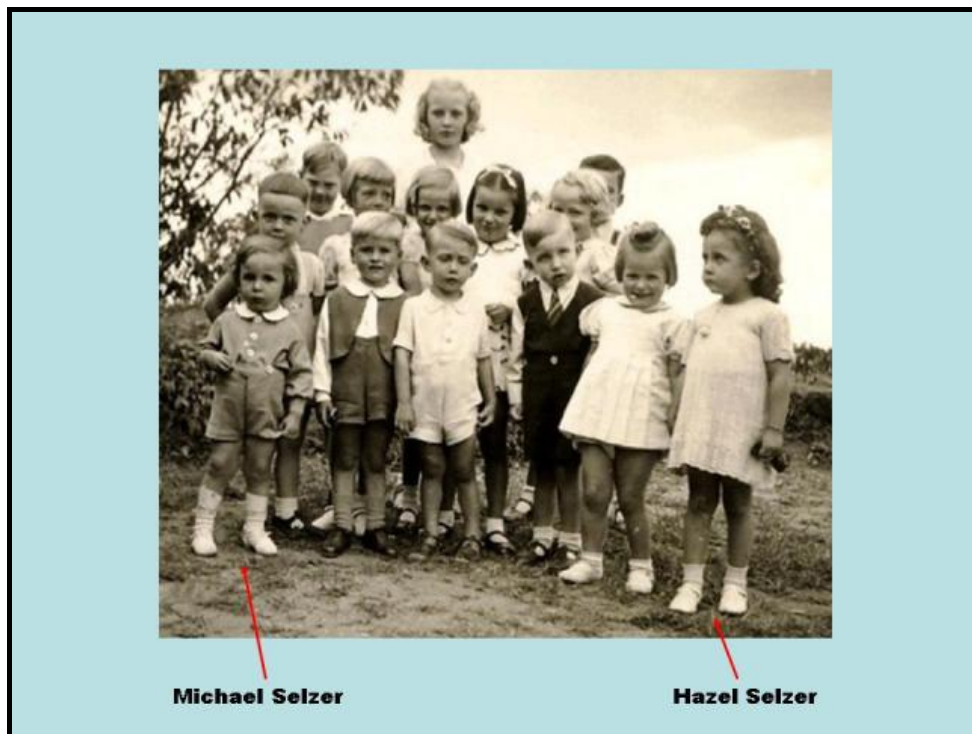
Kate had to cope with the children on her own. I was of little help, sad as this sounds. The children reacted with some signs of anxiety to their new environment due to the tension, the irritability, the depression which surrounded them, but, fortunately, they soon accepted their new state of life and settled down. There were many children in the Purandhar Camp and our children soon found new friends. For a time a kindergarten had been functioning, but there was never a sufficient number of volunteers for such a task and the Government, via the Commandant, did not think it necessary to offer a sufficiently attractive salary to attract one of the older girls or a woman to look after the children in the Camp. For some time we privately engaged one of the single girls to



spend a few hours daily with Pipsi, but we had to come to the conclusion that neither was the girl interested in her job nor Pipsi in her companion. All in all, however, the children had always company and there was always something going on to keep them busy.

In Purandhar, children had always to be supervised and guarded as the camp was situated on a hilltop and the many unguarded slopes and cuts invited an accident. Fortunately this was much different in Satara where the ground was flat, where no traffic of any kind endangered children playing in the roads and where the guards at the exits prevented the children from straying outside.

Pipsi got her first schooling in the Camps and later also Michael. Many of the grown-ups liked to work as teachers, although most of the school facilities were found among the missionaries and the Nazis.



All in all I do not think that the first years of their lives which the children spent in the internment camps had been a disadvantage to them or had left them with a handicap. Of course, they missed many of the good things in life they might otherwise have enjoyed, but such technical advantages or any form of luxury living certainly do not make children into better people.

If you say that they must inevitably have felt the tension, the depression, the anger which were so specific for the life in such camps - especially in the early years - you are right. The children had felt it, at least for some time, but all in all they came through it very well. They lived for 5½ years in such an atmosphere and they appear to have forgotten all of it in a short time, when we started a new life after the war. "In liberty" they experienced for the first time separation from us, when they stayed for weeks and months in boarding schools and their reaction to this separation was certainly evidence that they had not "forgotten" they years in the camps.

Pipsi found on her own the answer to the question she once asked when she was barely three years old. "You always talk about Auntie Nazi; but where is Uncle Nazi"?

## Fight for survival

This heading may sound exaggerated to you. You may be justified in thinking thus. There was after no all really no need to fight for our physical survival: we were smoothly and efficiently taken out of circulation and dumped into a camp. What kind of survival was there to fight for ? You are right. Our survival our physical survival was assured as long as we lived our lives according to the rules and regulations. Our lives were assured as far as sanctuary can promise this. I am talking of course of surviving in a state of a sufficiently balanced mind. I am talking of keeping sane. Of being able to face, to take in a situation which was made to disturb your mental balance. But is this true? Is this a fact? It does not seem to be true because in all the years during which we were interned, some 5½ years in all, there were hundreds of others in the same position and with similar problems, perhaps even worse one than ours and nobody lost his mental balance, nobody got mentally deranged, nobody had to be certified. In short: I have been exaggerating. I have been wrong to do so.

Let us, therefore, look at the issue from another angle. I was very unhappy all through the 5½ years we were interned. I think it is not necessary to enumerate all the causes and all the reasons. It was mainly the humiliation, the degradation I saw in our life, in our environment. I could never overcome the hurt, the anger I felt and this was compounded by the helplessness, the powerlessness which we knew so well and which was constantly pointed out to us. We were ruled and governed by individuals who did not know us, who did not care about us, for whom we were numbers and to whom every reaction of ours, every protest, even if not expressed in words or deeds appeared as a revolt or at least an impertinence. We were surrounded by people who enjoyed advantages they in no way merited because of their decency or because they had done acceptable deeds or because they possessed superior traits. The officials in charge of the camps were our superiors in every sense of the word and they did their best to make us feel their superiority and they did this with greater sadism the more they sensed that, though we bowed, we did not accept their pretentious claims. We knew that in the files of the Government we figured as cases, as numbers and not as individuals of flesh and blood. We knew only too well that nobody cared about us or our well-being. We knew that our friends had long ago lost interest in us and that those who had initially at least and for some time shown some sympathy were only a fraction of those whom one had counted as one's friends.

The most painful experience, one which was repeated again and again, with monotonous and exasperating monotony was the disappointment of not being among those who were released from time to time. Now and then the rumour spread through the Camp that a list of releases" had arrived and after an initial day or so of painful waiting one watched the happy people who were called into the Commandant's office to learn the good news. And one had to console oneself that possibly the next time. And the next time never came. This was an experience many of us had, I agree, but I think I was the only one who never knew why we remained interned at all. Whenever others asked this question of themselves, they could always console themselves that they were after all "enemy aliens", that they carried German or Austrian passports etc. while we thought, in our childishness in our self-illusion, shouted from the rooftops, that we were not to be classified as enemies. I do not know why I did not accept the fact, why I did not resign myself after many refusals that I was not going to be told what the Government of British India believed it had against us, why I did not understand that the factors I had on my side, that of being Jewish, that I had worked on behalf of the JRA in Bombay when I had contact with foreigners or had them come to India, that I had a Polish passport and a

Consul in Bombay to protect us, were of no value, were self illusions. It would have been better had I never fought against this impossible situation, had I preserved my dignity and had I not offered those who "handled" us the pleasure to watch our discomfiture. Instead I made one application after the other, reacted to every rumour that applications for a job in some outlying place, for some military, were invited and that a successful candidate would be released from the camp. You may think it would have been better had I never, or let us say after the first or second application for release that the Government had invited, again written any application. It is easy to judge this from your and my angle now, but in those days, months and years any straw any rumour, any application kept up that hope without which we might have sunk into lethargy. There were times when I felt I had done my utmost and that I was not going ever to react again: when the notice went out that whoever wanted to be released should write an expose to Government in which he should try to dispute any possible accusation he thinks might have led to his internment, that he should defend himself against any possible accusation he thinks might have been raised against him without his knowledge. Imagine! This happened indeed and this time I refused to make a fool of myself. But in the end I did write a letter defending myself against all possible imaginary accusations because Kate felt that no chance should ever be missed and that we might one day be sorry to have not taken part in this farce. On another occasion when the Deputy Assistant of the Home Department in charge of the camps came on one of his sporadic visits and all those who wanted to talk to him - I had already twice had the doubtful pleasure of having sat in front of this man - but Kate insisted that I line up in the queue too; when I was sent in by the Commandant I had to go through a few degrading minutes because I did not figure on the list of interviewees that fellow had in front of him, I still wish I had not listened and had not been taken in by these apparent efforts to kindle hopes for which there is no basis.

However, there were so many other instances where some hope was allowed. We read in the newspapers and learned also from notices emanating from the Commandant's office that medical officers and also volunteers for any other kind of service were wanted. It would take up too much time to tell you in detail about all those applications I wrote: to the French, the Dutch, the Poles, the Belgians, the Free Forces of all the countries Germany had occupied; to the Chinese, the Abyssinians, to the Congolese and to the Egyptians. Many, if not all, replied that they had no place for me as long as I was interned; from others I received no reply which in many a case only meant that a positive or otherwise encouraging reply had been kept back by the Censor and in other cases by the Commandant's office.

I wrote to many of my patients and asked for their intervention. I wrote to many Indian Princes and offered them my services. Some replied, others did not, and again I am certain that very often the reply was not to the liking of the Censors. The Maharani of Cooch Behar did her utmost to help me; she offered me a job in her State; she gave guarantees that I would in no way be able to do any harm.

They organized other Maharajas to act in a similar way. Nothing came of all this.

I wrote and I wrote. I asked the Polish Consul General for his help. In the beginning he refused, saying he had nothing to do with me, but later on his attitude changed: he played the good consul for reasons I do not care to know, as I am certain that all my letters went in any case into his waste paper basket.

You will ask me why I did not learn from the first few results, from the experience of the first few months, why I continued to struggle, to fight, to write? This is what I wanted to tell you at the onset of the chapter, that this writing, struggling, fighting kept us sane, kept us afloat, left us with that tiny amount of hope, even though for a few days, weeks at the most each time, without which we would not have anything to cling to, to support us.

Friends asked their friends to intervene on our behalf. Francis Klein, a very good friend, had Sir Maurice Dwyer, the Chief Justice of India approach the Home Secretary in Delhi who was responsible for our internment. I was told that even the Chief Justice did not succeed in learning the reason for our internment. I cannot imagine that this can be true; but at the same time I do not say that such a refusal was at all impossible. I had a firm of English solicitors intervene on my behalf - and was told by them that the Government of India had given as the reason for our internment that we had been in contact with people suspected of Nazi sympathies. Who were they? One should have thought that such kind of information could have been disclosed as without doubt that person with Nazi sympathies with whom I was suspected to have been in contact had also been behind barbed wire and the disclosure of his name could not have caused the war effort any kind of harm anymore. No, they did not want to tell me who that contact was and where. The Government could not have made a mistake, given a wrong interpretation to an innocuous fact, could not have been given wrong information? The Government did not want to disclose... and there was nothing you could do. You could only think that Government did not tell the truth. For some time you reacted with anger, but soon this dissolved in resignation.

And then one day we learned that those who could obtain an entry visa for the USA or any other country would be released without delay. I was told that we could leave the camp, the country the moment I could present a visa to any country not at war with India; Government of India did not mind us leaving under such circumstances. We had no contact with anybody outside Europe, except for the USA. I wrote to my cousin Samuel Wallach and asked him for an affidavit. He sent me an affidavit. I required a second affidavit and I wrote to Dr. Fedder in Stanford University. He too sent me affidavit.

I asked the American Consulate in Bombay if they would give me a visa for the USA and he promised such a visa as soon as I had completed the formalities, i.e. as soon as I had the affidavit controlled and checked and as soon as he could obtain for us a place on the "quota".

At last we had a hope to grasp. Fedder promised me a job. Samuel promised us all the help we might require to settle in the USA. I applied to Government of India for a week's leave so that I might return to Lahore, to sell there all our possessions still stored there. I was given the required permission. I travelled to Lahore. I disposed of all we had. I returned with some of our valuable things which we intended to keep and packed these into the few boxes which we intended to take with us. Again I applied for the permission to visit the USA Consulate General, as I had now all the documents ready, had the money to buy our tickets for the journey, had the assurance of Government that we could leave the country.

I was given an appointment by the American Consulate and when I arrived in Bombay and when I hopefully presented myself before the consul who handled our case, I was told that enemy aliens, especially those who were interned, could not be admitted "for the duration of the war". Why this sudden change of mind? It was just two days after Pearl Harbour had been bombed by the Japanese. The United States herself was at war now.

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To look at the Queen

It is certainly superfluous to elaborate on the fact that every change of scene, any kind of break in the monotony of our life was welcome when we were interned up there on the mountain top of Purandhar. A visit to Bombay "on parole" was definitely of major importance to me - and by proxy to Kate - during those years and it helped very much to make our life somewhat tolerable because it restored, for some time at least, our bruised self-confidence. I travelled some five or six times to Bombay on invitation of different Maharanis who lived there on and off, who had been my patients in the past and who wanted to consult me on or other medical problem they thought important enough to make my visit worth their while. I have also some vague suspicion that; these good ladies wanted at the same time to give me "a break" i.e. wanted to arrange a kind of vacation for me. It is a fact that I always returned to the camp refreshed and reinvigorated. Most of the time I stayed with Francis Klein's family and I realize only now the courage and the kindness this implied. I must also make it clear that these visits of mine to Bombay had been permitted by the Commandant personally and on his own responsibility and that he had not referred the matter first to the Home Ministry in Delhi as he should have done. This was found out later when I was in disgrace, when Holland was apparently reprimanded for his independent action in this respect and it was decreed that "such visits to Bombay for professional purposes should not have been granted in the past and should have to stop in future". I have made quite some blunders, haven't I? Or was all this only a show for my sake? I know that whenever I went outside the Camp to Poona or Bombay, I was watched and every step recorded. Was there the hope of those in power that on such a visit outside the camp I would somehow give them material with which to prove anything they wanted to have proved? You do not know these crooked police minds of the Indian Government people, if you think such an idea of mine ridiculous.

Of all these visits distinct memories have remained. I remember a most impressive - not only gastronomically - luncheon party of the [Maharani of Cooch Behar](#) where I met people whose names had become bywords in Indian art and politics. I remember another occasion when I came to examine the Maharani and found her at 2 p.m. still entertaining her guests at a "Cocktail Party" which had started at 11 a.m.. When at last all her guests had left, I had to agree with the Maharani that she was in no fit state to be examined medically and we had to postpone the examination for the next day. I remember the time I was called to see the Maharaja of Dewas Junior and his Maharani and I was their guest for two days in the Bombay Yacht Club. Believe me I found on that occasion how unfavourably accommodation and food in the Club compared with the ones in Purandhar. I remember the visits to the Maharani of Baroda, to her palace in Pedder Road in Bombay where I not only had to examine her, make a diagnosis, prescribe a treatment, but had also to cross swords with her in arguments usually provoked by her. All in all, these verbal fencings were quite entertaining.

One such visit to the Maharani of Baroda has remained in my memory for an episode which I have never forgotten, because it revealed a trait in her character which astounded me very much because it was so unexpected.

When I was called to Bombay that time to see the old Maharani, we decided we should make use of this opportunity to consult Prof. [Oscar Gans](#), a Frankfurt dermatologist, who had established his practice in Bombay, about a small skin blemish on Pipsi's face. The child, then about three years old, was very excited about this trip because we had given her to understand that we were not only going to visit the skin doctor who would take away the small red spot on her face, but that she would also have the opportunity to see a real live queen, somebody like the one of which she loved to sing:

"Pussycat! Pussycat! Where have you been?"

"I've been to London to see the Queen."

During all the days it took to make the necessary preparations and arrangements, the child never tired of asking for details about the Queen, how the Queen looked, how she dressed, what she was going to say to her. Patiently we answered all her questions and we made her also show us the curtsy she was to make when she stood in front of the august personality. (In Germany a child is supposed to curtsy to her elders, even to those without blue blood in their veins - at least this was the case before the war.)

We were carried down the hill by coolies to the bus station at the foot of the mountain; from there the bus took us to Poona and from there the train to Bombay, where a taxi brought us to the house of the Kleins. All this was new for Pipsi, but her thoughts were far too occupied by the Queen she was going to see to relish the newness of all she saw. That very afternoon we visited Prof. Gans who with the help of an electric needle removed the blemish from Pipsi's skin forever. Pipsi was a very good and docile patient because she realized that a child going to see the Queen was not going to cry because of a little pain.

"When are we going to see the Queen?" I was asked innumerable times during the day, and "We are going to see the real Queen", she replied to all the adults she met and who asked her any question about herself, about her wishes, about how she was and how she felt.

I had on arrival phoned the Maharani to ask her what time would suit her next morning to see me for the examination.

"Come at eleven in the morning", she answered, "and you can afterwards stay for lunch with me".

"I am grateful for your invitation, your Highness", I replied, "but this may not be so easy this time. I have brought my small 3-year old daughter with me who would very much like to see a real live Queen. She has so often heard of the Queen in London whom Pussycat has visited, and as there is at this moment hardly the opportunity for her to go to London too, I told her that we have a real Queen also in Bombay and as I was going to see her as a doctor, she could come along with me on the chance that the Queen would be kind enough to receive also a small girl like her. I am now rather honour-bound, Your Highness, to ask you if you would be kind enough to permit me to bring the child along tomorrow?"

"Of course, doctor, of course", came the reply over the phone," bring the child along. I could not imagine any greater pleasure than to see her". It was unmistakable that the old lady was very pleased to be shown as a real Queen to my daughter.

Next morning the chauffeur of the Kleins drove us to the Baroda Palace. I had laboured most of the morning to get Pipsi's curls into a decent shape and I had succeeded in this better than the Kleins' Ayah who with her incompetent fumbling threatened to spoil Pipsi's and my day.

"Are we going to see the Queen now, Daddy?", she asked when we drove off.

"Yes, darling. In a short while we shall see her. And do you know what you have to say to the Queen?"

"Yes, Daddy. I shall make a nice "Knicks" when I stand in front of her".

"That is all you have to do?"

"No, Daddy. I give her my hand and say very nicely: 'How do you do, Queen'. Is this right?"

"Yes, this is right".

This conversation was repeated more than once before the car deposited us in front of the palace, and where my old friend, the fat Household Minister greeted us and by his clumsy attempts at friendliness succeeded only to make Pipsi shy.

Instead of the private rooms of the Maharani as I had expected, the man preceded us to the large hall, where as a rule the great receptions or dinner parties took place and which I myself had never seen before. It was a large hall, about 25 meters in length, and it was bare except for a row of chairs along both side walls and a large throne-like chair standing on an elevated pedestal at the end of the hall. On this chair the Maharani was seated in her plain white cotton sari bare of jewellery and embroidery (as was expected from a Hindu widow, whatever her rank). Behind her stood, against a colourful background, three of her granddaughters, young charming girls clad in beautiful brocades and silk saris. They were all smiling at us when we entered and while they watched us walk slowly towards the dais, the child clinging nervously to my hand.

"Where is the Queen, Daddy?", whispered Pipsi.

"There at the end of the room, darling. You are going to see her in a few seconds."

"Where is she ?", asked the child a second later.

"There she is in front of you, the lady sitting in the chair. You know what you have to say when we reach her ?"

"Yes, Daddy. I know. But I cannot see the Queen."

By that time we had reached the pedestal and we stood in front of the Maharani.



"Good morning, Your Highness", I greeted her. "May I present to you my daughter Pipsi who so much likes to see you?" The Maharani bent forward with a smile and extended her hand. Pipsi looked at her, looked at her hand and then she looked at me and asked with a frightened whisper:

"But where is the Queen, Daddy?". She looked at the girls standing nearby and continued. "Is the Queen there?"

"No, darling. The Queen is here in front of you. This is the Queen. Give her your hand and do what you have promised me you are going to do".

The child abruptly turned away from the extended hand, grasped my leg and cried: "This is not a Queen. This is an Ayah," and she sobbed in bitter disappointment. Only then did I realize that even if she might have forgiven the absence of a crown, she had expected the Queen to be young and beautiful, to be clad in silks and brocades and covered with diamonds. But she never could accept a queen dressed in a simple white cotton sari, a Queen in addition who had not the slightest chance ever to win a prize in a beauty contest for ladies of advanced age.

To my greatest surprise, the Maharani's reaction was still more startling. She turned to the Chamberlain who had been trailing us, and with a congested face she ordered him:

"Take her away from here! Take her out of my sight. At once away with her!"

But before the old fellow could move, one of the three girls who could only with difficulty suppress her laughter, ran forward and took the sobbing child into her arms.

One hour later, after I had completed my official visit, I met Pipsi again. She was smiling now and she clearly had enjoyed her visit with the young ladies. She knew now that queens may not always be queenly but that princesses of whom she knew also from the many stories she had heard, were a reality.

Do you know, that I realize only now that this was the last time I ever saw the Maharani of Baroda? She never asked to see me again in my professional capacity nor did I ever meet her again anywhere else.

### The time came when I was appointed Medical Officer

Among the internees of the Camp of Purandhar you could find quite a number of interned doctors and it was very convenient for the Government to appoint one of them as Medical Officer (M.O.) instead of sending a doctor from outside. Hamburg was the Camp Medical Officer when we arrived; he was soon thereafter released and Faibush appointed in his stead. After some time also Faibusch was released and a doctor had to be appointed for the vacant post from among those who were still in the Camp. It may be that Holland, the Commandant, tried to be fair; may be that life was so monotonous for him that he wanted to have some fun too. In a sudden upsurge of democracy he ordered a ballot to be taken by which the camp inmates could indicate their preference for a new camp physician. Unfortunately I got the majority of votes and with it the nomination. I say "unfortunately" because it would have been better for me had I kept my hands off this job. But this is not the only instance where democracy and its intrusion into our lives has caused much mischief for us.



The camp had been provided with a hospital: a small brick building in which the two large rooms could have accommodated six beds each; there was also a small entrance hall which could have served as a waiting room and there was a small dispensary where medicaments prescribed by the doctors were stored and distributed. However, the hospital did not function for the simple reason that the Commandant did not see any need for such a hospital. In this way he avoided the need to increase the medical and nursing staff. He once told me in a weak moment that he feared the inmates might take advantage of such a hospital and with the help of dishonest doctors spend too much of their time there. He must have had strange experiences in the past. He decreed therefore that patients could be treated equally well in their quarters and that all medical services could be applied as well in the private rooms of the patients as in any hospital. He did not deny that once in a while a serious case might occur and according to his calculations it would have been cheaper to send such serious cases to the Government Hospital in Poona.

And this was the way things were done. Whoever was in need of my services sent me a message to this effect and I visited the patient in his room. The patient would receive from me one or more prescriptions for one or more of the nearly 300 kinds of mixtures, powders or tablets stored in our own dispensary and the doctor who was in charge of this array of coloured mixtures and variegated powders would then dispense the prescribed medication. In that very rare case where surgery was needed or an x-ray required, I would apply in writing to the Commandant and it depended entirely on his judgement if my request was justified. His was the final and ultimate decision and it depended on his esteem for the doctor, on the opinion he had of the patient, any grudge he might harbour and also at times on his experience in "similar cases" among his friends, his family or his subordinates, sometimes somewhere in the past. I had the impression that much depended also on the state of his digestion as I could not otherwise explain in many an instance his opinion and his decision. In the exceptional case, however, when he agreed that the patient could be transferred to the General Government Hospital in Poona a further exchange of small notes between myself and Holland was necessary to settle if a litter carried by coolies was required or if the patient could use his own legs and walk the steep road from the camp to the bus stop and back again. It rarely happened that a litter was granted which is a pity as the coolies benefitted as much as the patient. I cannot remember a single case where he ever granted the expenses for an ambulance although such requests for made many a time; for we had quite few serious cases which we had to refer to specialists and also some minor surgical interventions which had to be done in the Poona Hospital. But all in all we were very lucky.

The medicaments I was allowed to prescribe were those used all over India in the primitive village dispensaries maintained by Government. Holland insisted that we had no right to demand a higher standard than the village dispensaries. I was allowed to order from a big catalogue issued by the Central Government Depot every six months medicaments to the value of Rs. 5000.-. The majority of the supply I received consisted of the manifold digestive-, cold-, tonic-mixtures which the primitive pharmacopeia permitted. Of course there was also castor oil aplenty and also aspirin, while quinine and sulfa drugs could be ordered in limited quantities, by order of the Commandant. This restriction applied also to bandages, splints, iodine, spirit, syringes as these items were also required by the troops and the military installations in general. The final list which the M.O. submitted underwent some further reductions at the hands of the Commandant, but I have never been able to find out what criteria he used.

Thinking back to those times I am amazed how few and rare were the serious cases with which we were confronted. Do not overlook that we were every year exposed for many months to the rigours of a very severe monsoon, that we had no adequate heating, that we had to cope with all kinds of insects and bugs, that our nutrition though sufficient was in no way ideal, that the standard of medication available was below that one expected in the civilized parts of the country even before the antibiotic era, that we had many small children and many old people in the camp, that we lived under great stress psychologically and emotionally. Still, out of the 350 prisoners who lived on an average in the camp only one person died - Mrs. Geduldig, as I have told you already - and one baby of whom I am going to tell you now. The tale may give you an idea of the situation I and others before me, had to face as M.O.

We had a strange couple among our inmates. He was a Polish-Jewish artist and she an Anglo-Indian Christian. Both were about 40 years old. The woman became pregnant and it was quite clear to us that we were going to face great problems with her as this was going to be her first baby. During the months I watched her and handled the many minor complications, I became convinced that the patient should be transferred to Poona as we would not be able to handle her in the camp. Repeatedly I asked for the transfer and every time I was refused. When her pains started and after they had gone on for 24 hours without any progress, I requested an ambulance to take her to Poona. Holland refused. He behaved as if he considered an impertinence of the woman to have become pregnant. I was helped by Dr. Laser who had considerable obstetric experience and after many a bad moment - the least problematic one was that the nurse holding the hurricane lamp by the light of which we worked (did I tell you that we had no electric light in the camp?) hit the baby's head - the child was born. It died a week later.

It would also have died had it entered this world in Poona or had Holland agreed to send the baby to the hospital because in those days we did not know yet about Rh-factor and blood exchange.

I was paid a monthly salary of Rs. 150.- and I shared this money with two other doctors: Laser who worked in the dispensary and Seide who accompanied me on my rounds or took on some work when I was otherwise busy. We were allowed the sum of Rs. 50.- for a nurse, but we managed to "engage" two of the women in our Camp who had nursing experience and we paid them Rs. 25.- each.

And so I worked as Camp Doctor. On the slips the Commandant sent me I was pompously called the M.O. Most of the day I was busy calling on the patients who asked for my visit. You may believe me: in the monsoon months it was no pleasure to make these rounds through the downpour which could go on for days on end. But we survived. Unavoidably my medical activities brought me in contact also with the Nazi inmates. I was the only one of our group to do so. I must state here that the Nazis were always polite, always correct, even in the pre-Stalingrad days. At times they took pity on me and offered me a hot drink or a fresh cigar, but they understood quite well why I refused. To those who insisted I made my refusal clear by looking at the picture of their hero Hitler which adorned at least one wall of their room.

All my medical activities came to an end, not because I was released like all my predecessors, because there came finally the moment when I collided with Holland, our beloved Commandant.

As a rule - as you have already noticed - I step aside whenever the cymbals clash and the trumpets sound in a Wagnerian indication that a dramatic event is taking place and I look at myself with a muttered "You bloody fool". I have always thus sat in judgement on myself at every turn of events. At this stage I do so too, but I can assure you that this time I have the right to claim attenuating circumstances: there is a limit to humiliations even a man with a philosophical pair of glasses on his runny nose can tolerate and beyond which he has to explode in order to keep his self-respect and his sanity. Understand in addition that at this stage in my life I was anything but a philosopher.

### Se tacuisses - sapientior fuisses

Let me explain to you that this is a Latin proverb, in case you have not realized this by yourself already. It means in good but free English translation: "You bloody fool! Why didn't you keep your mouth shut?" Had I followed this precept, had I asked myself this question before I opened my mouth, much might have been different. But I ask myself at times, who knows if it would have been better indeed. Perhaps, after all, my fate had to be pushed into a direction which though at times cruel in appearance was possibly in the long run the best march order for us. You must have been curious to know more about my break with the Hollands - let us say better, when they lost all kind of sympathy for me - about my demotion from the job of M.O. and about our transfer to another camp. Here is all the information you might wish to have.

One fine day the Camp was visited by Dr. Huber, the Director of the International Red Cross in Geneva, who had come to India to check among other things also on the internment camps. The Red Cross did good work through all the war years, I am told, but such an organization can only function if there is a vestige of democracy or decency for them to deal with. I do not blame this organization that it had never insisted on checking the concentration camps in Germany. After all, also more powerful organizations like the churches and the allied governments did not show much interest in the fate of the Jews in the concentration camps - and these organizations knew very well what was going on there.

It was a good thing that the Indian Government was aware that the IRC could at any time demand to inspect the ways the interned enemy aliens were treated. It was a very good thing that the camp commandants knew that the IRC representative could any day poke his Swiss nose into their affairs. This made it obligatory that a certain standard of decency and a tolerable state of order was kept in these camps. The only deplorable thing was the fact that the only visit a man of the IRC ever paid to the Camp had to happen while I was the M.O., when I was sick of all the frustrations and humiliations I had accumulated.

I was also physically sick when Dr. Huber came. I was in bed with high fever and the visitor sat next to my bed.

After we had exchanged the appropriate polite questions and answers, he came at once to the point.

"I have received complaints about you", he started.

"Not about you personally, of course, but about your work".

"I was told that you have treated your typhoid cases in the open cubicles adjoining the dining room".

This was true. Two months before we had a small typhoid epidemic, you might say a mild epidemic, which was soon over without any complications or causing us undue difficulties. It was also true that some of the victims, some bachelors, had been living in cubicles partitioned off the dining room. The dining halls were since long out of use as by that time the contractor had already terminated his contract, but the bachelors had formed a cooperative and were using part of one of the dining halls. The remaining portion of the dining hall had been subdivided into cubicles for the bachelors who had never had single accommodations before and who had welcomed this arrangement.

"This is true, Dr. Huber", I replied. "We had a small typhoid epidemic and I had to treat the patients wherever they lived, and as some of them lived in the cubicles off the dining hall, I had to treat them there".

"Don't you think it was necessary to isolate these patients?" he asked. "And don't you agree that of all places a dining facility would be the most unsuitable neighbourhood for typhoid patients?"

"I fully agree. I agree with you in every detail. But under the given conditions this was the only solution possibly. There was no other way to handle this epidemic. Of course, I would have preferred to send all such cases to the Isolation Hospital in Poona, but to think even of such a step is too ludicrous for words".

"I do not understand you", replied Huber, and he truly appeared puzzled. "You have a perfectly good hospital at your disposal, where you could have put up these patients; but when I went through the place I noticed that you have never used it, never even organized it. I was told that you never bothered to take over the place".

"Is this so?" I came back, possibly more heated and more aggressive because I was not feeling too well. "So, you have seen the hospital. And you have also seen that the one large room contains a broken chair and the other a broken chamber pot. This is all there is in the hospital. You want me to put patients into these rooms? Did Holland not tell you that I have on more than one occasion begged him to let me clean up the place, to put in furniture, in short to make that place into a real hospital? Did he not tell you that also the previous M.O.s have tried to get the hospital going? Every time we mentioned this subject we have been told that there is a war going on, that there is no money available for such luxuries, and that we have to be satisfied with what we have got".

"I think your Commandant is right", was the surprising reply of the IRC man. "With the money you have available for medical purposes you could easily run a small hospital like this".

I looked at the man as if I was delirious.

"What do you say? What money? Have you also fever or am I so ill as to hear badly? Do you know that I have to fight for every prescription which is beyond aspirin, castor oil and the eternal and useless mixtures? Do you know that whenever I want to send a patient for an x-ray to Poona or whenever I ask for a specialized opinion from that hospital, I am told that there is no money available, that not enough has been budgeted for such extravagances? Has Holland told you that last month I lost a baby because the Commandant refused to send the old prima para, who was so certain to have a difficult delivery, to the hospital in Poona?"

I realized now and learned to my surprise that Huber had as much reason to think me incomprehensible as I had thought of him. It was very simple:

"I cannot agree with you", he told. "I know that everything is getting more and more expensive, but with a little care and economy you can cover all your expenses, also those involved in the occasional transfer of a patient to Poona, from the monthly budget of Rs. 5000.- at your disposal".

"Rs. 5000.- ?", I asked. "Are you serious? What are talking about? I have no Rs. 5000.- a month, I have only Rs.5000.- every six months for the purchase of the powders, mixtures, tablets I have to order from the Central Government Depot. There is no budget for x-rays, for hospital visits, for any additional expense, for any hospital equipment".

To cut a long story short, I learned from Dr. Huber that there was a medical budget for the Camp, Rs. 5000, were available every month for the hospital expenses. Of the M.O.s salary which was fixed at Rs.1500.- a month I received only Rs. 150.- There was also provision for two nurses at a monthly salary of Rs. 350.- each but I knew only of Rs. 50.- for the two of them.

I do not have to tell you that I was surprised and shocked. I do not have to tell you that also Huber was surprised, though he did not appear shocked. This man must have had much experience in such matters, I am sure. His surprise was mainly about the chutzpah, the impertinence of our man Holland to take such a large slice of the budget for his own pocket. As a rule others in his position were more modest.

When Huber left he not only apologized, but he also said: "You know? Not only in Germany are human rights trampled underfoot".

"Se tacuisses ..." but I did not keep quiet. In my indignation, in my stupidity, in my search for revenge and exploding over the frustrations I had experienced all along, I told my friends about this interview. I was surprised that not everybody was surprised. Many had expected this to be the case and they pitied me for my innocence and optimism. What shall I tell you? Within a few days, no within a few hours, everybody knew about the nice income Holland had made from his patrimonial treatment of the medical side of our problems. There was much anger and unrest, especially from the side of those who thought their health would have benefitted had the money been available which they thought could have been used for better medicines. for a visit to Poona etc.

An order was issued from the Commandant's Office: I was to be suspended with immediate effect from my job as M.O. My "assistant" Dr. Seide was appointed my successor. The consequence was that the unrest increased, that more protests were voiced, that people demonstrated - unfortunately mainly the Nazis - and that I was feeling very foolish. Holland could report to Delhi that I was causing riots and unrest, that the Nazis rallied behind me and he demanded that I be sent to another camp.

Holland was, of course, not punished for his embezzlement. Government never does such things - at once. A year or so later when the time was ripe, and nobody might have thought there was any connection with his dishonesty - he was replaced.

It stands to reason that the moment Seide took over, he avoided any further contact with me. Poor fellow. May he live long and happy. (He settled in Dacca, in East Pakistan, and came to visit us with wife and children one day in Lahore. He was as much a "nebbich"

as he had been before. He emigrated from Dacca in the late sixties, I do not know where to.)

## Marching Orders

There was unrest and agitation in the Camp. It began in July 1943 and continued into August. People were angry and their helplessness made them express their anger in tones and words which only an intelligent Commandant would have understood as harmless. People recalled now events and situations where the lack of certain medicines or the callous refusal of specialized treatment had caused unnecessary hardship and suffering. Until that moment a state of apathy, a kind of resignation regarding all that had occurred or had not occurred had become evident, but the news that the Commandant had pocketed the money Government had allotted for the health and wellbeing of the internees, removed that apathy and made resentment and frustration again come to the foreground and to be voiced in protests. People grumbled, people protested. At the same time there was reluctance to associate even in these protest actions with the Nazis who in their exuberance and their expectation of the unavoidably coming victory never missed an opportunity to disturb the harmony of the camp or cause embarrassment to the Government.

I was aghast about the reaction I appeared to have caused. It had become impossible to stem or to divert what I had unconsciously started. Holland was well informed about every aspect of the situation; my neighbour reported everything she heard through the partitioning wall. Had she been provided with a listening device?

I was, of course, immediately suspended from my duties and in early August the rumours started that I was going to be transferred to Satara. And so it happened. On August 22 we were sent to the Camp of Satara. We were allowed sufficient time to pack a few cases with our belongings, but as I had mentioned to one single friend only, to Hans Zuckerbaecker, that I was going to take with me all the hundreds of slips Holland had sent me over the months and from which sufficient material could be culled for a humoristic book, it could only have been my neighbour who had overheard us and had informed the Commandant of my intention. He threatened me with the search of my belongings if I did not voluntarily return all these slips, orders, information's and demands he had sent me. I returned most of them, kept a large number of them. Dalai, the policeman who had been ordered to search our luggage, never did so; it seems to me he felt ashamed on Holland's behalf.

On August 22 we were taken under guard by bus to the railway station in Poona where we spent the night, about 12 hours in all, in the waiting room of the station. We travelled next morning by train to Satara station from where an auto bus took us to the camp. The journey lasted all in all 25 hours, certainly not a pleasurable outing if you are accompanied by two small children. It would have taken us at the most three hours and would not have cost Government more, had we been taken by a bus straight from Purandhar to Satara. Clearly Holland did not want to forego this last opportunity to have his revenge.

It was a hot and humid day when we arrived but we were glad to have arrived. We welcomed even the dismal quarters we had been allotted. For I was told at once by Fern, the Commandant that orders from Government had made it clear that we were not to be given any facilities whatsoever which differed from those granted to the average internee, and that I was under no circumstance to be allowed to work as a physician.

## Interment and Parole Camp Satara

Also Satara Camp had formerly been a military camp and this made it easy to accommodate the large number of internees, to watch them and to keep them under control. As I have mentioned earlier, the camp consisted of three wings. We were taken to the "anti-Nazi wing", where Jews and a certain number of courageous Germans and Italians who had openly renounced their own governments were accommodated. There were also a number of missionaries who for reasons I cannot fathom were considered a priori anti-Nazis although, with very few exceptions they were outspoken, some even ferocious Nazis, and above all they were all Jew-haters. The centre of the camp was taken up by a large meadow around which barracks, small brick houses (formerly used by servants and some well-built brick-houses (formerly used by officers) were arranged.

A half-mile away to the north was the German Nazi wing where similar barracks and similar houses harboured those who claimed Hitler their leader and Goebbels their mentor. This wing harboured also a large swimming pool and, fortunately, conditions were better here than in Dehra Dun as the Jews were allowed to use the swimming pool also in those times when Hitler's armies were victorious in Europe.

About a mile to the east was the Italian camp. The fascists of this camp tried to make up for the disrespect shown to them by their Nazi comrades and for the poor military showing of Mussolini in Europe and elsewhere by a greater ferocity in their anti-Semitic expressions and exhibitions. An avenue lined by more than a hundred old trees leading from our camp to theirs was shown to have been mapped in anticipation of the coming victory. I was assured that also my name, newcomer though I was, figured already in that map insofar as a tree had also been reserved for me to be hung on during the first day of the victory celebrations.

The Commandant of all three camps was Fern, a retired Police Inspector. I have not understood then nor do I now how the Indian Government, even if intending to downgrade the internees, to spoil their morale or to humiliate them, could have appointed such a low-ranking policeman who was in addition such a crude, illiterate and vicious old man, to such a job. (I can only explain this gesture by visualizing the Dy. Secretary of the Home Department, V. Shankar, making in this way a demonstration of his true feelings with regard to Europeans, in respect of his experience in England in his youth and the constant sense of humiliation and frustrations he must have experienced even in his exalted position of the moment). Fern was an Anglo-Indian grossly overweight, and if ever at any week moment a spark of sympathy might have been awakened in your breast when you stood in front of him, facing this clearly unhappy individual, you may be sure that this sentiment would have been killed at once by the gross language he liked to use. He had many enemies, the worst among them his own wife who never missed an opportunity to make him appear ridiculous. She did not hesitate to curse him in public and to make him understand in the presence of our people that his exalted position was in her eyes nothing but a crude joke afflicted on all, him and her included, by some joker in Government. If he tried to revenge himself on her by flirting with the blondest of German women (he pointed out to everyone at least once that his first wife had been such a blond woman) or if she had begun with her vilifications of his manhood only in consequence of his behaviour, is beyond my knowledge.

I do not know how much Fern "made on the side", how much he took in bribes; there were many rumours, many had even clear proof, but such kind of behaviour was expected from a man of his kind and in his position. In any case, he was certainly more

experienced and more adept in this game than Holland. I personally did not pay him ever any bribe, but had after some time to give in to his hints and allusions, his demands even, that I had to sell the Voigtlaender and Leica cameras we owned and which he kept in safekeeping. We had to give in after holding out for a long time and we had to let him sell the cameras on our behalf. He brought us back a very ridiculous price, but what could you do? He sold our cameras and the hundreds which belonged to the other internees to a shop in Bombay. This shop was owned by his nephew and he was himself a partner in the business.

Officially we anti-Nazis were supposed to be also "parolees" but this was a prerogative on paper only. Hardly ever was one of us permitted to go to Poona to buy urgently needed items for the children; hardly ever was any of us sent to the hospital in Poona - but the Nazis were given all these facilities. They could go on such trips to Bombay; they could bring in food and alcohol without any control. In the evenings they visited the Commandant in his bungalow there to listen to radio bulletins from Germany. They were always sure of Fern's protection whenever a Jew or anti-Nazi complained about them. In one case Fern forced even medical certificates to the effect that a certain Mrs. Schlueter, one of the blood Nazi women who resembled so much his first wife, was dying of cancer with the result that she and her husband were released so that "they could spend her last few weeks of life in freedom". Schlueter who had been the representative of the large pharmaceutical concern Schering A.G. had also been the commissar for "Rassenkunde", i.e. the specialist of the Nazi Party in India for racial purity - he decided who was an Aryan and who was not, was released along with his wife, who thereafter was miraculously cured and did not die as expected. (In 1949 Schlueter came to visit me in Lahore telling me of the good health of his wife; but since that visit I have for many years stopped prescribing any medicament of Schering's which Schlueter tried to make me patronize).

Satara was a sad camp. It was even sadder than Purandhar. Though the heat was often unbearable in summer, climatic and living conditions were preferable to those in Purandhar. But it was a sad camp. People were depressed, listless; they had lost that spark of hope which makes you accept with tolerance that which is intolerable. The rude Commandant, the strutting Nazis, the string of allied defeats of which we learned from the newspapers (we were allowed local papers but not a radio), the waning interest in us of friends outside, and the growing surfeit of us the Jewish Relief Agency (JRA) could not hide. However, there was no bickering in the Camp, no fighting among the people of our camp. They had formed themselves into small circles and groups; there was no strife, no competition, nor any interference between these groups. Every one was friendly and helpful. Much was due to the fact that nobody tried to get favours from the Commandant - it would have been considered shameful to be counted among his favourites - and there was hardly any informing.

Camp conditions were especially good for the children. Pipsi and Michael never had the feeling that they were missing anything in their lives. The camp was their world, they had no memories of the past, of any past. All adults were friendly and kind to the children, and there were always many children with whom to play. The camp was isolated, closed and there was no motorized traffic. Children could go and play wherever they wanted and we had not to fear that they might go astray. The school system was well organized, mainly by the Germans and although the school population was a mixture of Jewish and Christian, Nazi and non-Nazi background. nothing of all which agitated the adults and their world was ever allowed to reflect into the classrooms. This I must state in all honesty: although many of the teachers were Nazis or missionaries, they never tried to



infiltrate their own ideas or otherwise to influence the children. I do believe they did so out of decency or honesty - the fear that they might cause sufficient trouble to face the danger of being sent to the camp of Dehra Dun was most likely the strongest motive.

I am sure that our children had their best days while in Satara, not only because they had so many friends, not because they had a balanced life, but because we adults had reached that state of resignation which makes you appear at peace. ...

Opposite to us lived the Bez family. Martin and Dora Bez and their five children. Martin Bez had been a missionary in South India but after a few years he changed horses and earned a good living as a homoeopath-naturopath. Dora was a very religious woman, one of the fundamentalist Protestants but she never attempted to proselytize. We became very good friends, and especially Kate felt lucky to acquire this contact with motherly, pious, confident, patient Dora. I did not see any incongruity in my being friends with a "quack doctor". He and his family were finally returned to Germany. After a year or so he wrote to ask for my help as he wanted to come back to the Indian subcontinent to settle in Lahore. I strongly advised against this and our friendship ended - but Kate and Dora continued to correspond regularly until recently. In 1971, on our journey through Germany, we visited them in Kirchheim and found Martin a prosperous citizen, owner of a Sauna establishment and a massage institution, and all his children well settled.

Notwithstanding all I have told you about my pessimistic attitude, I continued to write to foreign governments offering them my services, but soon an end was put to this activity of mine as Government, i.e. the *babu* (clerk) in the office of "V. Shankar Esq." in Delhi could not be anymore bothered with me and my letters and instructed the Commandant not to accept any further applications from me.

I could not work as a physician which did not bother me unduly though the implied humiliation hurt my pride. How determined they all were to humiliate me you can see from their reaction when the Camp M.O., a Bulgarian of whom I am sure that he was not a qualified physician, suddenly died of some virus infection. I was the only physician left in the Camp but Government preferred to overcome many difficulties and sent over from the Dehra Dun Camp a Nazi doctor who already proved a dismal failure while in Dehra Dun.

Only on two occasions did the Commandant disobey Government orders and commandeer my help: once when a 2-year old child of an Italian journalist drowned in an open ditch which Fern had never bothered to close notwithstanding all representations) and once when Fern himself suffered from a swollen knee and did not want to accept the Bulgarian doctor's diagnosis of "general decay".

I am glad I could occupy myself with writing, and although my "writings" were not very successful, they at least kept me busy and sane.

### The therapy of book-writing

I am certain that the encouragement of book writing, of writing of any kind by people interned, imprisoned or otherwise confined is a useful therapeutic weapon. At least I gained this impression. I wrote and wrote during most of my free time in the camps. Much of what I wrote I destroyed, but much of what was left I hoped to see one day published. I did not try to be self-illusory and to pretend that I only hammered away at the typewriter for my own sake and pleasure; I was far too sure of myself and of the inherent

qualities I possessed to realize my shortcomings, the insufficiently researched work I produced.

A reaction to this I realized only later, not only as a sop for my wounded pride when I understood the low standard of my achievement, but when I understood only too well how my self-confidence of old, my strong self-assurance, my driving belief in myself had been undermined, after 5½ years of gruelling humiliation. But whatever the ultimate outcome of my writing efforts may have been, these helped me very much; they set a task in front of me when I felt I had no future; they made me feel that I could produce something when I began to fear that I had become useless; they gave me some sense of value when I feared I had nothing anymore to look forward to.

I wrote a "novel" which was, of course, immature and stupid. It might have had some value if the stuff had been rewritten, changed over, improved - but I have never touched the MSS since. I have no interest anymore to touch it now; the time has come to burn it. I wrote a book about diet. I composed long lists of the caloric value of the mineral and other contents of every food item used in India (I could get all relevant publications from different sources) and I composed diets for every kind of disease and for every possible grade of health. I sent the MSS with the permission of the Commandant to Sardar Khushwant Singh, the lawyer friend in Lahore who after some searching found a publisher, an achievement indeed considering the scarcity conditions the war had already brought on. By the time all was arranged and settled the war had ended, the Hindu publisher who had not yet completed the printing job had run away and the new Muslim owner at last brought out the book. In view of the changed circumstances I changed also the title to: DIET IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN IN HEALTH AND DISEASE". It had a kind of success - it was soon sold out. When the publisher approached me to prepare a second edition I did not require any further book-therapy.

I wrote also another "book"; I worked on it feverishly as if possessed. It was to be a diagnostic guide, arranged by symptoms and signs or groups of symptoms and signs, and its should facilitate the making of a diagnosis of even rare and obscure diseases. I was very proud of my achievement and began to view my internment as a blessing not only for myself but also for the medical profession. I was allowed to take the heavy MSS of more than 3000 pages to a publisher in Bombay specializing in medical literature. The man was very kind, very polite; he went through the bundle of papers with great interest for more than one hour, checking here and counter-checking there. At the end he congratulated me on my work and showed me a book called "SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS IN CLINICAL MEDICINE" written by a E. Noble Chamberlain which was much better and more complete than mine, which was not only a very successful book but which made any rival book a failure from the outset. And so this dream was washed away - but the help I had from working on this "book" was worth all the expenses in paper typewriter ribbons, carbon paper and literature I had used up.

## Stalingrad

Stalingrad! I am sure you have heard of Stalingrad? It is the name of an industrial town in Russia, called thus respectfully to commemorate the bloodthirsty Russian dictator in all eternity. But it is more! It is today that point in history where during World War II a decisive battle took place. It is even more! It is now a concept. It is a turning point in history. It has come to personify hope and vindication on one side, end and defeat on the other.

Also in Satara this battle of Stalingrad, this victory of the Russians at Stalingrad, the defeat of Hitler at Stalingrad, the destruction of a myth at Stalingrad brought forth a great change.

Now we, the Jewish internees began to smile. We felt vindicated in our optimism. Also the anti-Nazi internees began to smile and to feel vindicated. It was now the turn of the Nazis to frown, to keep their eyes and their voices down. They did not anymore sing their Nazi songs. They did not sing at all anymore. The Italian fascists had already undergone a metamorphosis; they had long ago already started to fight among themselves and against the Germans. That infamous map on which every tree on the avenue bore one of our names, had long ago been destroyed.

A great change had also come over the Commandant and his staff, that is his clerks and his police constables. They began to distantiate themselves from the Nazis. They began to refuse them favours, even if the Nazis were impertinent enough to ask still for such favours and to pretend that they had not read the signs in the sky. There was now and then a smile, a polite word for the anti-Nazis, and the occasional request for a journey to Poona was not anymore a priori refused.

The greatest change you noticed among the missionaries, many of whom were living among us in the anti-Nazi camp. Had they insisted on this arrangement because they wanted to be near the Jews to convert them, if possible, before Hitler finished them off? If so, they had certainly been remiss in their duties, because not one of these missionaries ever tried to have personal contact with the Jews - until Stalingrad that is.

On our arrival in Satara we had been allotted two rooms in a long barrack where five more families lived. The partitioning walls between the different quarters did not reach the roof - it was imperative to leave some space to facilitate ventilation - and it was inevitable that you could hear every word spoken in the next rooms. Our neighbours to the left, a missionary family composed of father mother and seven children could indeed be heard to talk, to cry, to fight. I am sure they heard no less well all our own activities. All of us in the long barrack acquired the habit to talk with a low voice to keep the children quiet so that one's neighbours were disturbed as little as possible. In this arrangement there was only one exception: thrice a day our missionary neighbour ate their meals and as it is the duty of a good Christian to pray before each meal, they did pray before each meal but they prayed with such fervour and with such loud voices that all of us were forced to hear their prayers. And in addition their dialect often so difficult to understand disappeared and they prayed in clear and exact German before their meals. They prayed not only that God in heaven, that his son Jesus Christ in heaven but also their neighbours in the adjoining room could hear how they prayed. And how they prayed! And how they begged God Almighty to pour his blessings on their beloved Fuehrer. How fervently they called for Jesus' protection for the armies fighting for the glory of Hitler and the Fatherland! They ended with proof that they were ecumenical in their prayers too: they begged their gods to make the stubborn Jews understand that the time had at last come when they were going to pay for their past crimes, for the blood of the Saviour they had spilled. They kindly asked their gods not to punish us Jews in too harsh a way, us Jews in any case condemned to eternal fire. I did not understand that latter part of their prayer but I felt I could not very well ask them for an explanation. Did they beg Jesus Christ to regulate the thermostat in hell to such a degree that we were only partially roasted? It is a pity that I shall go from this world without ever having asked them for a clear explanation.

All this changed after Stalingrad. The missionaries next door ate their meals as often as before - though I cannot vouch if their appetite was unchanged - and they prayed as often as before, but we were not allowed anymore to hear what favours they asked from their gods, Lord Almighty, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. They prayed without letting us know what they asked for us in their prayers. I have no doubt, however, that their appetites were not reduced to the same degree as the decibels of their prayers.

The changed military situation recalled to the minds of the missionaries that they had also certain duties to fulfil. These people did not lack a primitive kind of cunning. A day or two after this change in the demands they sent upwards to heaven, we were sitting with friends in the small square of garden we had planted in front of our portion of our barrack, when our neighbour and three of his missionary colleagues appeared at the fence. After wishing us a good evening in the name of the Lord, my neighbour, apparently the leader of the group, began to explain to us that Hitler and all the misery he had brought on this world were the fault of the Jews themselves, that the Lord, the Messiah would not return before all Jews had recognized Jesus Christ as their Saviour, that God had sent Hitler to make us Jews realize that we do at last accept Jesus and that they, the missionaries, had been given the duty to help God and Hitler in persuading the stubborn Jews. They did not mind using also some left-handed flattery: they realized that not only Jews but also the other heathen all over the world had to be converted to the belief in Jesus Christ as the Saviour to come, but that they, the missionaries, had so far not been successful in their task. This too was the fault of the Jews. God wanted first of all the Jews to become Christians so that they could thereafter act as missionaries and there was no doubt in the minds of these men leaning over our garden fence that we Jews in our cleverness would be much better missionaries than they themselves ever could hope to be. Again they preached to us, with zeal and elevated finger that whatever had happened to us so far, was going to happen to us, was finally and ultimately the fault of the Jews themselves. Q.E.D.

But if you think that this chapter is ended, you do not know human frailty and missionary cunning. By the time these missionaries had completed their exposure, our friends and we had sufficient time to gain our breath and composure back, and we told them in a way and with words I am still ashamed of that they should get out of our eyesight as otherwise we would not be able to guarantee their health and safety. They understood very well how we felt and fortunately they very quickly disappeared from our field of vision.

But what of their cunning, I mentioned?

It appears that these German missionaries did not entirely put their trust in God too often and for too long to look after their wellbeing. That very evening - it was already late and we were readying ourselves to go to bed - when somebody knocked at our door. It was my missionary from next door. "Could I give him a letter", he asked, "only a small note to the effect that he had always been an anti-Nazi, had always been friendly to the Jews?" Such a note, such a certificate would be very useful in the coming days and months, he added.

I am afraid I was somewhat disappointed when the door which I closed with my foot did not hit into his face; he was too quick to jump.

## The story of another missionary

Let me tell you one more story of a missionary. He and his wife had spent the war years in the Nazi Wing of the Camp of Satara. I had seen him occasionally from afar, but had never exchanged a word with either of them.

One evening he appeared at the door of the small house in which we had been living in the last year of our stay in Satara. The war had ended. Most of the inhabitants of our wing had been released. Only a few of us Jews were left, along with all the Nazis and Fascists, all the Germans and Italians who were going to be repatriated.

The missionary was accompanied by his wife. Though they had been married for eight years, she had not become pregnant notwithstanding all the efforts he and the doctors had made. Could I help them to get a child? Though I was not allowed "to practice" in the camp, I was intrigued by the challenge a case of infertility often represents. I agreed to do my best. I asked all the many questions one asks in such a case. I examined them both, and I thought I had found the reason for their sterile marriage. It was simply a technical cause. A few months later they informed me full of joy that she was pregnant. A short time later they were sent home. A few months later a letter was forwarded to us via the Home Department to Lahore, in which the good priest told me that his wife had gone through the pregnancy "with flying colours" and that they were now the parents of a beautiful boy. They lived now in East Berlin and he described how bad living conditions were there - it was 1946/47 you must remember - and he concluded with the hope that I and my family were in good health and doing fine again.

I should have taken this letter and the interesting news from an old Nazi priest as the end of a chapter, but I did not. I wrote back to congratulate the couple and I sent them also a parcel with 2000 cigarettes (though they were the cheapest cigarettes available in Lahore, they were still 2000 cigarettes) as I knew from newspaper reports that cigarettes were the accepted currency in Germany with which you could make life very comfortable. Indeed a few months later the Reverend told me that the parcel had arrived, that he had at last been able to buy all the necessary linen, food, furniture with the help of the cigarettes, that there were enough cigarettes left to make life comfortable for him, his wife and his son, for some time to come.

I was touched by the fact that with a small expense from our side we could make life so easy and so comfortable for this man and his wife and especially for the baby "where I had also contributed". I cannot help it that I realize how stupid I am when it is too late. To show my stupid Jewish heart I sent them a parcel, this time with 5000 cigarettes, and in due course I got acknowledgement from the priest that the parcel had arrived, and again he told me how grateful he was. He described that for 5 cigarettes he could buy a dozen eggs, that for 10 cigarettes he had bought pots and pans, that he had exchanged 200 cigarettes for a bicycle and so on. He told me how many cigarettes were required for a motorcar, how many for a pram, how many for car tires, in short he gave me a price list of all and every article on the market, using cigarettes as currency. He concluded his letter with the hope that this letter would awaken in me the interest to go into business with him. He proposed that I send him from now on at shorter and regular intervals large packages of cigarettes and that we build up a business in partnership. He could with cigarettes buy land, houses, furniture, industrial goods and he promised me that I could be within a very short time a very rich man. Did I not agree with him, that it was God's will that we should come together by way of his fatherhood, should overcome the dreadful events of the past by our friendship, and should form now a prosperous association?

I did not think so. I did not even bother to tell him this as I never replied to his offer.

We are to be "repatriated"

This was the decision which Government of British-India communicated to us.

The war had ended and we stayed on in the Camp. Most of the others had been released. One after the other they had left. In the end only a handful of us Jews were left - and of course all the Germans, the Nazis and also the non-Nazis. They knew they were going to be sent back to Germany, could only agree that this was right and justified and that they had no basis to object to this repatriation. Soon also many of these deportees had gone and only a small group of us Jews were left in Satara. Looking at the list of those few I cannot with the best of will find any other reason or cause for this special treatment than the displeasure, the hostility, the anger of somebody up there in the Home Department; or there may have been some unfavourable report in their files - and such bad marks were usually contributed by the commandants. Certainly none of the individuals left over in the Camp - and I include us too - could in any way have been suspected of being an enemy agent or pro-German or dangerous to the safety of the Empire or one of its smaller components. Without any doubt only personal factors, mainly a private vendetta or at best the outgrowth of officiousness could have been the reason for our having been left behind and of our now being all of a sudden threatened with repatriation.

Unlikely as it may sound to you there was every chance that we would have been sent back to Germany - or Poland if in our case the wording "to the place of origin" was going to be interpreted in this way - and that we would have been added to the flood of hundreds of thousands of "Dispersed Persons" roaming through Western Europe or dumped again into a camp somewhere in Germany. All this would have possibly been acceptable even had Kate and I been alone, only for the sake of getting at last out of the clutches of the commandants and the *babus* in whose hands our fate had been too long now. But you do not accept such a solution, such new ventures so easily with two small children, whom you will not expose to the economic straits of post-war Europe, especially with some strength and determination still left.

However, nobody should see in this the opportunity to accuse Government of British-India, especially the British element in this set-up, of being cruel or heartless. The powers up there in Delhi decreed that those of us who could provide a visa for any country in the world ready to admit individuals of such a dangerous kind as our-selves, would be allowed to leave, provided these entry permits were presented in time before the general evacuation of the camps was started and long before the journey back to Germany had begun.

Again I approached Sam Wallach in New York. Again he sent us an affidavit. Again the American Government refused a visa. I do not blame them. If their British Allies considered us such dangerous people as to keep us imprisoned for about a year after the war had ended and would not let us remain in India, we could hardly be considered suitable or welcome types of new immigrants. I agree with your objection that so many true Nazis, criminals in every sense, were allowed to immigrate to the USA, but you must not blame the United States' Government for such an oversight as these criminals mostly came with documents and recommendations provided by the Vatican.

There was only Israel left for us to view as a refuge, or the country that was still called Palestine then, which was still enjoying the rule of the very same British we had known ourselves for the last few years. Palestine was at that time in turmoil, as you will recall, and it was most unlikely that a permit for people of our kind would be obtainable. Notwithstanding this we tried. Friends, relatives tried - and as was foreseeable, nothing came out of it.

I am sure we would have been loaded along with some thousands of Germans on to troopships and would have landed in some port in Germany and then dumped anonymously somewhere there, had not one of our or of others' letters to leading Jews in England brought some results. I am sure that this was the reason why Government of India suddenly changed its policy. They permitted us to leave the Camp. We were entrusted to the care and the responsibility of the Jewish Relief Association in Bombay. And so it came about that we could pack our few possessions still left in Satara and leave for Bombay. We departed on May 8, 1946 to land in the Home maintained by the JRA in Habit Chambers of Byculla, a dismal place in a neglected house in a shabby part of Bombay. We were supposed to stay there for some time, i.e. until Government and JRA had decided our future fate, spending our time by thanking God, Government and JRA for our deliverance.

About thirty old and quarrelsome people had been crowded into the six-room flat the JRA had transformed into a "Home", The older inmates, mostly destitute, some of whom had been there for years, refused, with justification, to vacate their corners and rightly resented any attempt of the "Housefather" to give up their advantageous places to the newcomers. We were "accommodated" in a space underneath the staircase, protected from the eyes of the other inhabitants by a rag suspended from a string. Our welcome and also our physical comfort in that new atmosphere of liberty were different from what we had anticipated, and the continuous fighting and arguing which went on around us, along with the poor food we were offered, appeared to us quite a come down even from what we had experienced in Satara. I do not think we would have been able to live this kind of life for long and Kate and I felt that our cup was about to flow over, when we could apparently persuade the powers of the JRA that we should be treated differently and moved us to a room in a private flat belonging to a refugee couple from some eastern country of Europe. This solution was certainly more acceptable than the hole we had to occupy for more than a week. Only the children did not agree: they preferred the crowded home in Byculla, where every adult had become their friend.

I had written to people we thought were still our friends and we found that most of them were indeed still friends. We were offered jobs, assistance, advice and sympathy. At last we began to regain our morale and our self-confidence. The most attractive solution was offered by Begum Shah Nawaz in Lahore, who asked us to come back, to start our work where we had left off and who promised us that she would render us every help and support she could muster. I am glad we took her advice because for some time we were tempted to accept offers of the job of Chief Medical Officer in one or the other of the large independent Indian States. A year or so later these States were no more independent and we would have been without a job again.

We had no money left but we still had some items of gold. We sold these and we hoped we would have enough money to start a new life in Lahore, that we would not require any help from anybody.

In the first week of September we were back in Lahore, ready to start our life again. This was the fourth time we started "a new life".

### **Kate and Hermann Selzer, Lahore 1952**



### A Jewish Heart

Before I close this part of our life history, I must recall an episode which moved us very much and helped us regain some trust in man and confidence in our future.

When we were living in Bombay for about six weeks or so, between the Camp and the return to Lahore; while I was trying to find an opportunity to emigrate to some country willing to accept us and to explore the possibility to start afresh somewhere in India, we realized that we were "nobodies", that we had no social status of any kind, that people tried to avoid any contact with us, even those we thought our friends and who later on behaved as if they were still our friends. I cannot blame them: for many years that we had been inmates in the camps they had bothered about and for us, and they had enough of all this. Possibly they may have experienced also unpleasantness because of this, from the side of the police or from other Jews? Be it as it may: none of the Jews in Bombay cared about us, considered us worthy of any personal or private attention.

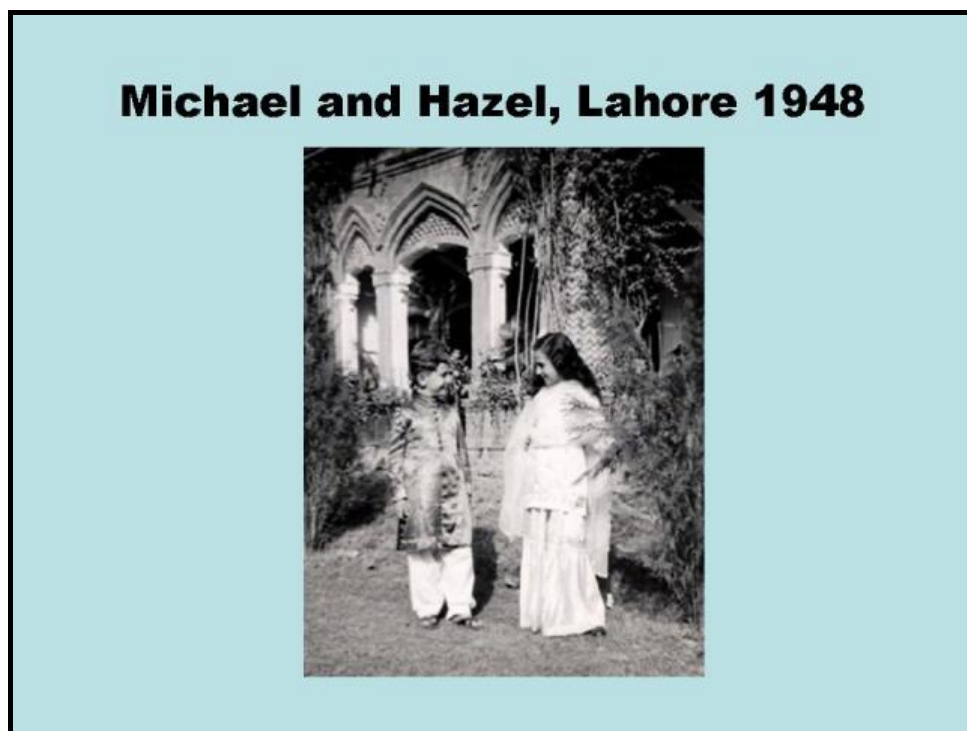
There was only one exception: one day we received an invitation from a Jewish family in Bombay, not from one of the immigrant German Jews but from one which has been classified as "Bagdad" Jews, that Arab-speaking group of businessmen and traders whose ancestors had immigrated into India about 200 years ago and had mainly settled in Bombay and Calcutta. Our host, his wife and four children, had heard about us and had invited us to tea to show us sympathy and friendship. This was done purely out of goodness and for no ulterior motive. This is the more remarkable as the couple had every reason to resent us European Jews. They had been instrumental in building up the practice, the circle of acquaintances, the introductions of the first two German Jewish doctors who had come to Bombay. He claims that he helped Drs. Berger and Weingarten to become known; that he loaned them the capital they required as initial outlay; that he undertook all responsibilities and guarantees on their behalf. However, once they had become known, had become rich, they never again visited this good man, never invited



him to their houses. The greatest disappointment this man had was that night when he phoned Dr. Berger urgently for help, when his son of 12 years, his only son fell ill with symptoms the father suspected were due to appendicitis (and his suspicion was justified; the child was operated upon that very night). Berger replied on the phone that he was very sorry indeed that he could not come to see the patient, as he was so very busy. He could give the patient, however, an appointment for 20 days hence.

When we left after a pleasant stay of about two hours the children carried large parcels with toys back home.

I have never forgotten this kind man; but when I wanted to write to him from Lahore that we had been successful in establishing ourselves again, I realized that I lost his name and address. It is a shame, a pity that I never again met or contacted this fine man and wife.



Epilog from Hazel 2010

After we settled in Lahore in 1946, my brother and I went to schools in Lahore and in Kashmir. In 1950, we went to Woodstock School in Mussoorie, India until 1953 when we went to Bedales, a boarding school, in England. My brother then went to Balliol College, Oxford and I went to University of London after which I completed my Ph.D. in Psychology in Canberra, Australia. After that, we lived in Israel for almost two years. I am divorced, and have two children and two grandchildren, all living in the greater New York area. I am now retired but working as an artist [www.leafages.com](http://www.leafages.com), and a radio programmer <http://web.mac.com/hzelkahan/Tidings/> I am also writing a memoir.

My parents remained in Lahore until the early 1973 when they moved to Jerusalem where my mother died in 1991 and my father in 2007. I visited my parents regularly in Israel which also gave me an opportunity to learn about the political situation in Israel/Palestine.

## **Dr. Hermann & Dr. Kate Selzer, 50th wedding anniversary**



He would be most fascinated to know that his writings have reached the community of German missionaries and would surely have found much to talk and write about in this newfound convergence of our lives that first overlapped in Satara and Purandhar.

### Links

- ◆ [Hermann Marcus Selzer Collection 1909 - 2005](#)
- ◆ [Stations of Loss](#)