

Minorities and Internment in South Africa during the Great War 1914-1919



Education Learning Resource
– Grade 8 and older

Acknowledgements

Images and documents have been provided by the following:

Eckhart von Fintel

National Archives London

Imperial War Museum London

National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria

National Military Museum of South Africa, Johannesburg

German Federal Archives Berlin

South African Newspapers: Rand Daily Mail, Cape Times

INTRODUCTION

This Learning Resource presents a global theme with a local South African focus. It has been developed as one element of a wider project which examines the internment of 'enemy aliens' throughout the British Empire during the First World War. It is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and led by Aston University, Birmingham, UK. Partners in Scotland include Live Borders, Archaeology Scotland, Edinburgh Napier University and the Internment Research Centre at the Heritage Hub in Hawick. The main partner in South Africa is KwaZulu Natal Museum.

Through the activities young people will gain an insight into an important aspect of the First World War which has ongoing relevance in the modern world. Minorities are still perceived as a threat, outbreaks of xenophobic attacks have happened in recent years, and illegal immigrants and refugees from other parts of Africa impact on local border communities and major economic centres.

Some of the themes touched on in this Learning Resource may prove distressing for some pupils as they deal with family separation and discrimination against groups of different ethnicities.

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NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa

Specific aims and skills of History CAPS for the Intermediate and Senior Phases (2.4.3):

Finding a variety of kinds of information about the past.

Selecting relevant information.

Deciding about whether information can be trusted.

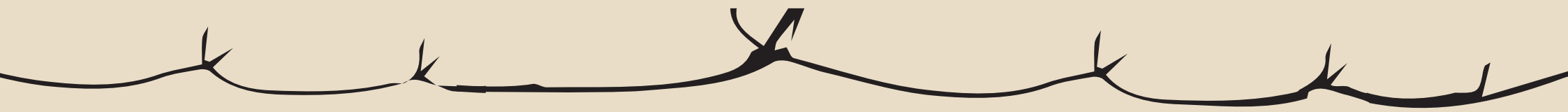
Seeing something that happened in the past from more than one point of view.

Explaining why events in the past are often interpreted differently.

Debating about what happened in the past on the basis of the available evidence.

Writing history in an organised way, with a logical line of argument.

Understanding the importance of heritage and conservation.



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This learning resource draws on research undertaken on the internment of civilians during the First World War. It is designed for use by pupils in Grade 8. It can, however, also be easily adapted for older or younger pupils. Much of the information about internment camps has come from available research on the Fort Napier camp in Pietermaritzburg which held mostly civilian internees during the Great War. Today the site is home to the Fort Napier Hospital that admits Mental Health Care Users. An exhibition catalogue about internment in the entire British Empire during the Great War is available in KwaZulu Natal Museum.

The teaching materials explore themes of equality and diversity through the stories of mostly German but also Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Bulgarian nationals. Many had made their homes in South Africa or German South-West Africa. Others were on business trips or were visiting families and friends. At the outbreak of war they suddenly found they had become 'enemy aliens'. Their situation deteriorated as the media of the time, primarily newspapers, focused on German brutality in the war, using emotive language to whip up hostility towards the 'enemy within'. This led to demands for internment or deportation which was implemented by the British government in the UK and throughout the Empire.

The situation of these civilian internees is explored through extracts of letters, newspaper headlines, posters, postcards, magazine articles, reports and photographs. Many of these sources can be printed out or photocopied for a classroom exhibition, if possible in A3 and mounted on the walls.

The original sources of information show

- How prejudice develops in society
- How the mental health of internees suffered during detention
- The types of strategies they used to meet the challenges of long periods of internment
- How the state can (over)react in a situation of perceived danger

The aim is to give pupils insight into people's responses to a particularly challenging historical situation. Comparative material from the media today can be included at the teacher's discretion in order to encourage pupils to explore how the media in South Africa react to perceived threats today.

The appendix provides a list of further reading and links to websites to support the project.





Internees, watched by a guard. *Fintel Collection.*

INTERNMENT - WHO AND WHY

On 5 August 1914, the day after Britain had declared war, the 'Aliens Restriction Act' was passed by the British government. This permitted the government to control the movement of the citizens of countries with which Britain was at war, including where they could live and what they were allowed to do. They had to register with the local police and hand in any weapons they owned. 50,000 civilians were interned throughout the Empire, including 30,000 in Britain and a further 20,000 in the colonies and dominions.

In the Union of South Africa, a dominion of the British Empire, on 7 August 1914 a government directive ordered all German officers and reservists aged 18 to 56 to be arrested. On 13 August 1914, the directive was expanded to include Austrians. On 26 September, the general criteria to intern enemy aliens more widely were set out in the Government Gazette.

On 21 August 1914, the first 100 prisoners arrived at the Agricultural Show Grounds (Sturrock Park) in Johannesburg. On 11 September 1914, the 1,055 aliens in the camp were transferred to Roberts Heights (Voortrekker Hoogte, Thaba Tshwane) in Pretoria. A month later, nearly 2,000 internees were moved to Fort Napier, Pietermaritzburg.

Internment was meant to hold, indefinitely and without trial, men between the ages of 18 and 56. By the end of the war a total of 3,000 men had been detained in South Africa. They were seen as a risk to national security whose return to Germany or another German colony to join the Kaiser's army had to be prevented. Others were not reservists or over 56 and were purely interned on the basis of their nationality. Some German-born women, children and older men were deported back to Germany.

Enemy alien women resident in South Africa were exempt from internment. Those in neighbouring countries were not and were deported to South Africa. 529 women from Lüderitzbucht (Luderitz Bay) were interned by 5 March 1915. They were allowed to return to German South West Africa (Namibia) from the end of July but remained under curfew [house arrest] for the rest of the war. Others came from Belgian Congo (Democratic Republic), Rhodesia (Zimbabwe and Zambia) and German East Africa (Tanzania).

WHO WERE THE MAIN COMBATANTS IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR?

THE ALLIES

BRITAIN AND ITS EMPIRE
BELGIUM AND ITS EMPIRE
FRANCE AND ITS EMPIRE

RUSSIA

ITALY (FROM 1915)

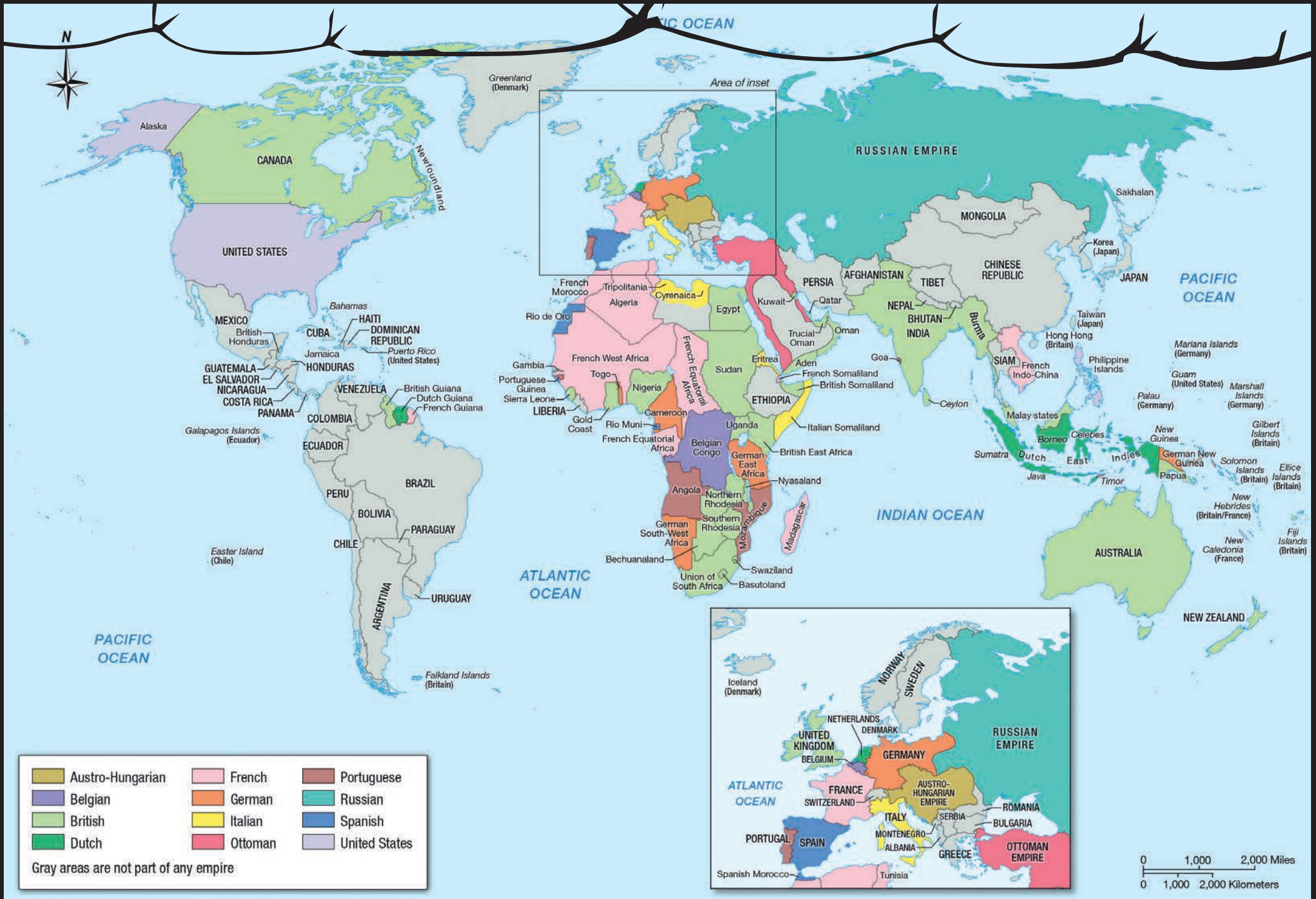
USA (FROM 1917)

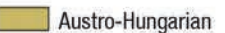





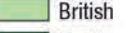





VERSUS

THE CENTRAL POWERS

GERMANY AND ITS EMPIRE
AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE
OTTOMAN EMPIRE (TURKEY)

BULGARIA



	Austro-Hungarian		French		Portuguese
	Belgian		German		Russian
	British		Italian		Spanish
	Dutch		Ottoman		United States

Gray areas are not part of any empire



'ENEMY ALIENS' IN SOUTH AFRICA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR



ACTIVITY

With the pupils, read the information panel about internment, look at the map of the world in 1914 and the list of combatants and explore the range of nations and empires involved in the First World War.

Using the sources on the following pages, research how Germans are portrayed and what kind of words are used to describe them.

Create a list of surnames you think are German.

How would you feel if you had a German surname in 1914?

Why do you think the Royal Family changed its name from Saxe-Coburg Gotha to Windsor?

Some South Africans whose names sounded German anglicised their names. For example, the mining engineer Hans Neuhaus in Johannesburg changed his to Hans Newhouse in 1915. Why do you think he did this? Would you do the same?

Wm. H. Müller & Company was a Dutch wool trading firm operating in Durban. In May 1915 it was ransacked and burnt down by an anti-German mob who mistook it for a German firm. The Netherlands were a neutral country during the war. How do you think Dutch people felt in South Africa?

Divide the pupils into two groups.

Group 1 is made up of South African children, Group 2 of the children of German mothers and fathers living and working in South Africa at the start of World War 1.

Ask each group to consider how the words and images they see make them feel.

Are the feelings of the pupils in each group similar or different?

Ask each pupil to write a short letter to their guardian telling them about what they have seen and how it makes them feel.

Teacher's note: in the course of this activity, if it seems appropriate, comparisons might be made with newspaper headlines today which pick out certain ethnic, religious, political or economic groups and use emotive words or images to describe them. Some pupils may make the connection themselves.



National Archives of South Africa.



National Archives of South Africa.

**GERMANS MUST NOT
CHANGE NAMES**

NEW RULE FOR ALIEN ENEMIES

London, October 9.

An Order in Council, published in a supplement to the "London Gazette" last night declares that—

No alien enemy may, after October 12, change the name he had at the beginning of the war.

The prohibition applies to the names of firms conducted by alien enemies and concerns in which alien enemies are partners. The name of the firm or company must not be changed.

A Secretary of State may grant an exemption.

Rand Daily Mail Oct 1914.

**"THE ROYAL HOUSE
OF WINDSOR."**

**King George Adopts a New
Family Name.**

NO GERMAN TITLES.

The King yesterday adopted for his house and family the name of Windsor. The Privy Council at which this was done was one of the most important held since the Coronation.

It was attended by the Duke of Connaught, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Prime Minister, the Lord President, the Earl of Rosebery, Mr. Andrew Fisher (Australia), Mr. G. N. Barnes, Lieutenant-General Smuts and the Hon. W. P. Schreiner (South Africa).

A ROYAL PROCLAMATION.

A Royal Proclamation, signed by the King, was afterwards issued. It set forth that:—

Henceforth the Royal House and Family shall be styled and known as the House of Windsor.

All German titles and dignities held by his Majesty and the descendants of his grandmother, Queen Victoria, are to be relinquished and discontinued.

All the descendants in the male line of Queen Victoria, who are subjects of these realms, other than female descendants who may marry, or may have married, shall bear the said name of Windsor.

The Proclamation concludes with an announcement of the discontinuance of the use of the degrees, styles, dignities and titles and honours of Dukes and Duchesses of Saxony and Princes and Princesses of Saxe Coburg and Gotha, and all other German degrees, titles, honours, etc.

The operation of the Proclamation (says the Press Association) would, in a given case, be something like the following:—Prince Arthur of Connaught, having a son born to him, such son would bear the family name of Windsor.

The King's action is the logical sequel to the recent dropping of all German styles and titles by other members of the Royal Family.

M.P.'s AND ENEMY DUKES.

Mr. Swift McNair, on the second reading of the Titles' Deprivation Bill (Lords), in the House of Commons yesterday, said the Bill aimed at the Dukes of Cumberland and Albany, who still retained their high British titles. Why had it taken the Government three years to eliminate traitors and introduce this measure? He hoped German influence would be a thing of the past, and there would be no more presents of fortresses like Heligoland to the German Emperor.

The Bill was read a second time.

SPY FEVER

ACTIVITY

Read "An Alleged Spy".

Discuss how stories like this would make people feel during the First World War.

Imagine you have to plan a poster, warning people about the danger of spies.

What sort of pictures or words would you use on the poster?

When you have planned this, each pupil can design their own poster to warn of the danger of spies. There is an example provided.

"A detestable system of espionage practised for many years by the German Government in this and other countries had been unmasked, and even the greatest friends of Germany had been appalled by the revelations of treachery."

**LORD PROVOST OF EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND, AT MEETING OF TOWN COUNCIL,
OCTOBER 1914**

AN ALLEGED SPY


ARRESTED IN DURBAN, INTERNED
IN JOHANNESBURGH

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

When a certain Australian steamer arrived on Saturday at Durban one of her passengers was arrested on suspicion of being a spy. He has been removed to Johannesburg, where he has been interned with the German and Austro-Hungarian reservists.

Rand Daily Mail 8 September 1914

DON'T TALK



THE WEB
IS SPUN
FOR YOU
WITH
INVISIBLE
THREADS

KEEP OUT OF IT
HELP TO DESTROY IT

STOP = THINK

ASK YOURSELF IF WHAT
YOU WERE ABOUT TO SAY
MIGHT HELP THE ENEMY

SPIES ARE LISTENING

Anti-spy Poster

GERMANOPHOBIA AND RIOTS

ACTIVITY

With the pupils, look at the two newspaper accounts of the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915 and the execution of Edith Cavell in October 1915.

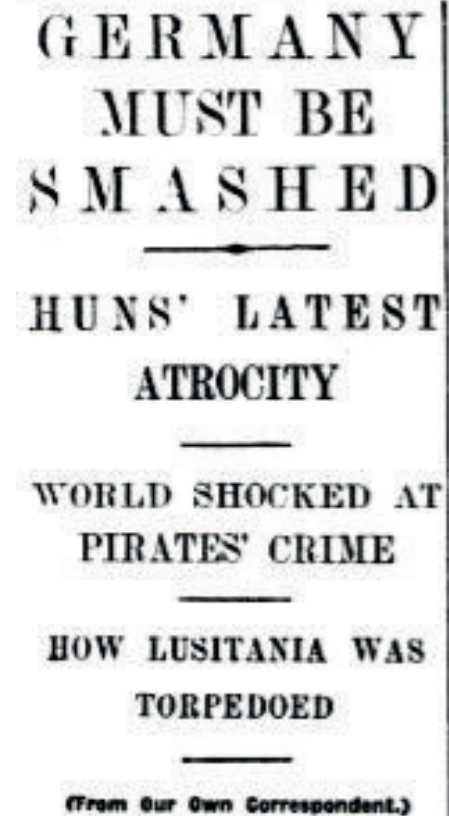
As these stories will not be familiar to them, the pupils can research the two stories and compare the modern accounts they will find on the internet with the accounts given in these newspapers.

*Ask the pupils to discuss the differences in the accounts.
Encourage them to explore the reasons for these differences:*

The two events triggered much anti-German propaganda, rioting, and destruction of German-owned premises by marauding mobs. Look at the following pages and discuss how all this might have appealed to, or affected, different social groups in South Africa.

Were the rioters criminals or heroes?

Reacting to complaints from the public, the German School in Johannesburg was closed and its teachers interned. Do you think this step by the Union government was justified?



GERMANY
MUST BE
SMASHED
—
HUNS' LATEST
ATROCITY
—
WORLD SHOCKED AT
PIRATES' CRIME
—
HOW LUSITANIA WAS
TORPEDOED
—
(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Rand Daily Mail 10 May 1915.

THE LUSITANIA IS SUNK; 1,000 PROBABLY ARE LOST



CAPTAIN WILLIAM THOMAS, COMMANDER OF THE LUSITANIA

ALFRED W. BRIDGEFORD

GERMANS TORPEDO THE GIANT STEAMSHIP AND SHE FOUNDERS EIGHT MILES FROM IRISH COAST

The Boat's Air Locks and Officers Work Heroically, But Inrush of Water Through Great Holes in Vessel's Bottom Sank Her Down, Bow First, in Twenty Minutes.

TWO FEARFUL MISSILES TEAR THROUGH SIDE NEAR BOW AND AT THE ENGINE ROOM
Great Ship Is Sinking St. George's Channel as the United States Launches Torpedoes That Sink Her Hull.

(Special Cable to the Herald) Special Bureau, No. 120 Fleet Street, London, November 18.

The steamship Lusitania, one of the largest and finest vessels in the world, was sinking in St. George's Channel, between the Irish and English coasts, yesterday afternoon with 1,204 passengers from New York and a crew of 300. When an unseen German submarine discharged two torpedoes which struck her and went far to the bottom in twenty minutes, the Lusitania, F. V. Jones, had in her 1,204 passengers and crew.



MAP SHOWING WHERE THE LUSITANIA WAS SUNK
PRELIMINARY POSITION OF MAIN GERMAN BATTLESHIP FLEET



CHARLES KESSLER

George A. Kessler One of Those Saved, Cable Message to Cunard Office Says

TRAGIC STORY OF MISS CAVELL'S HEROIC DEATH The Daily News

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1915
CERTIFIED CIRCULATION LARGER THAN ANY OTHER PICTURE PAPER IN THE WORLD
No. 5743
One Halfpenny.

HAPPY TO DIE FOR HER COUNTRY: HOW MISS CAVELL, THE BRITISH NURSE, WAS MARTYRED BY THE GERMANS.



Miss Cavell, who was known as 'The Flower Girl of Brno.'



Miss Cavell, who was known as 'The Flower Girl of Brno.'



Mr. Broad, the American Minister in Belgium, who was one of those who visited Miss Cavell.



Miss Cavell in uniform as a nurse in the Red Cross.

Wireless Call for Help Land Stations, Not Aerial Observers, Disappeared Before Aid Can Reach Her

TUG ARRIVES AT QUEENSTOWN WITH 150 SURVIVORS FOUND IN BOATS

Numerous Distinguished Passengers Aboard, but No List of Saved Can Be Obtained—Rescued Are Married to Hospitals and Many Are Reported Dead from Injuries.

1,000 LIVES LOST, LAST ESTIMATE

A BRITISH dispatch to the Associated Press says the latest reports indicate a loss of life on the Lusitania of about 1,000.

Imperial War Museum London.



Anti-German Poster.

Cape Town

*Cape Times, 13 and 14 May 1915;
The Star, 13 May 1915*

The outside of the German Club was wrecked in a few minutes. [The mob] threw the effects on to the street - piano, pictures, a German flag, a bust of the Kaiser, chairs, etc. These were all burned. At nine o'clock the entire central area of the town was brilliantly illuminated by fires in different quarters. It was not the hooligan who was at work. It was the well-dressed man, the man of good

social position and business standing, who was determined to wipe something off the slate. The most remarkable feature of the affair was the prominent part played by women - not of the hooligan class, but respectably-dressed members of the community. 'Take that, you baby-killers,' shouted a woman, as she aimed a large stone through the window of Spilhaus and Co., in Strand street.



DEUTSCHE SCHULE
(GERMAN SCHOOL).

HOSPITAL HILL.

JOHANNESBURG, 2nd January 1915

OFFICES: 50, GREEN'S BUILDINGS,
COMMISSIONER STREET.

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
W. VOOGT, SECRETARY & TREASURER
Box 99, JOHANNESBURG.

OFFICE-PHONE No. 3943.
SCHOOL-PHONE No. 2528.

The Commissioner for Enemy Subjects,
Palace of Justice,
P R E T O R I A.

Sir,

On behalf of the Committee of the German
Government School of Johannesburg, I beg to urgently submit
for your kind consideration the release on parole of the follow-
ing German teachers: -

6/10/1543/14 Dr. WILHELM UPMEYER

" " 2318 " KARL OTTO HEINE (A: 2859)

" " 2462 " HEINRICH SCHROER (A: 2858)

" " 2777 " HEINRICH MUELLER (A: 2863)

The latter three have already left for the internment-camp
at Pietermaritzburg, while Dr. Upmeyer is still here, awaiting
the final consideration of his application for exemption from
the order of internment. The reasons for which this Committee
desires to support the applications for release are that the
first named three gentlemen are free from all military
obligations towards their native country and have never served
in any military capacity. The services of these teachers,

- who -

*Upmeyer
Heine
Schroer
Mueller
A. A.*

*Re Dr. W. Upmeyer
1543*

Local press, National.

TEUTONIC MISCHIEF
WORKERS

A CALL FOR ACTION

To the Editor.

Sir,—What has become of all our public
men? Will none of the doughty cham-
pions of British rights in the past come
forward once more, and lead a protest
against the Teutonic menace in our
midst? Surely we cannot remain silent
and allow the just demands of the School
Board and the Teachers' Association to
be ignored through want of public sup-
port.

Shall we again allow a Government
School to become a seminary for the
spread of German kultur? Shall we
allow positions which should be filled by
British teachers to be given to aliens?
Surely not. Are we going to allow Ger-
man land-grabbing and trading associa-
tions to continue to exploit our native
population under the cloak of missionary
enterprise? Let us at least register a
protest against the action of the Provin-
cial Council which voted a grant, a con-
siderable proportion of which will find its
way into the funds of these Teutonic mis-
chief makers, who in return will instil
disloyalty and unrest into the minds of
our natives.

Now, if ever, is the time when conces-
sions which were granted to these people
because they were anti-British, should be
withdrawn.

- 2 -

who are all in the employment of the Transvaal Education
Department, are indispensable to this School it being quite
impossible, as far as has been ascertained up till now, to
find substitutes for them. In the case of Dr. UPMEYER the
position is even more serious, he being the principal and
organiser of the school and whose absence would be most
fatal to the efficiency of the school. Further, Dr. Upmeyer
is at the head of the Boarding-establishment attached to the
School which would have to be disbanded, a number of children,
whose parents are away thereby becoming deprived of their
home.

As regards Mr. Mueller, he being the only reservist,
it is pointed out that as a specialist in science subjects we
cannot hope to find an adequate substitute for him; it is
his special duty to prepare pupils for the matric and as
several are in course of preparation, the permanent removal of
Mr. Mueller will be most disastrous to these pupils.

Generally speaking all these teachers are indis-
pensable, the school being short-staffed anyhow. As the
new term opens on the 19th instant, your early decision in
the matter would be greatly appreciated in order to afford
time to consider what to do in case the one or the other of
these teachers cannot be released now.

- As -

Newspaper headlines reporting looting of German owned homes and businesses, London.

Dubotzki Collection.



Postcard of German internees behind wire.



Guard tower, internment camp in Australia. Dubotzki Collection.

WOMEN LEAD
ANTI-GERMAN RIOTS
ALL OVER LONDON.

ANTI-GERMAN RIOTS
LONDON IS THE HOME FOR THE HUN IN WAR
DAILY SKETCH
GUARANTEED DAILY NETT SALE MORE THAN 1,000,000 COPIES.
No. 1,927.
LONDON, THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1916.
(Registered as a Newspaper.) ONE HA

Clear Out The Germans, Say The People



...took place in London and all over England yesterday the German Government alone is responsible. In the words of Mr. Asquith, in the House of Commons, "It is surprising that after the progressive violation by the enemy of the usages of civilized war and the rules of humanity—culminating for the first time in the world in the use of gas—there had arisen a feeling of righteous indignation among all classes in this country for which it would be difficult to find a parallel." The German Government were taken during attacks on shops in Poplar, which was the scene of fierce anti-Teuton outbreaks.—(Daily Sketch Photographs.)

"THE CRIMES OF OTHERS"
Mr. Asquith's Anxiety To Protect
The Innocent.

Boys Against Alien
The East End was particularly active in its efforts to protect itself against Germans or supposed Germans yesterday. The Daily Sketch witnessed several of the outbreaks. This is how they proceeded. A tobacconist and confectioner's shop in Burdett Street...

GERMAN
Between Salmon Lane, the India Dock-road, all in the East End, the Germans formed themselves into a mob and are delaying police and other forces.

SYMPATHY

ACTIVITY

Read the sympathetic reports on page 19.

Do you think most South Africans felt like this about those who were affected by internment?

Many Germans had fought on the side of the Boers during the South African War (1899-1902). Discuss how this might have triggered different reactions in different social groups after 1914. Why would H.G. Harrison of the British Foreign Office complain that the 'Union government have an inevitable tenderness towards the Huns'. Why did the South African government want to keep the 1914 Rebels separate from the Enemy Aliens?

Internment deprived families of the main breadwinner. Historian Graham Dominy writes: 'A pathetic group of near-destitute wives and children crept into Pietermaritzburg seeking lodgings and charity so that they could be near their husbands and fathers confined in the Fort. These unfortunate victims of a conflict not of their making were snubbed, ignored or patronized by the whites of the city according to temperament or affiliation' (in Natalia, 1989, p. 36). Discuss how internment disrupted ordinary lives.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Read the statement below and ask pupils to list the reasons for and against taking action against German civilians. Once they have done this, a class debate could be held to present the arguments for or against interning civilians.

"The South Africans were right to discriminate against people of German heritage living in South Africa during the First World War."

The anti-German agitation continues, especially on the part of the 'British Citizen Movement.' Those johnnies are too funky to fight armed Germans, so they are bent upon ruining the unarmed ones, and wreaking their vengeance on poor women and children. I shall insist on protecting our German citizens. What I regret exceedingly is that our Germans did not follow my advice to lie low, and keep out of political quarrels. Let them use their votes if they like, but not run the risk of joining a political party that includes a strong rebel section.

Letter from Louis Botha, Prime Minister of South Africa, to a friend. *Fintel Collection.*

LITERATURE FOR PRISONERS OF WAR

To the Editor.

Sir,—By the kindness of General Botha, Prime Minister, and the courteous permission of Colonel MacDonald, D.S.O., I am allowed to collect literature for the prisoners of war detained at the Show Ground. Books and periodicals of an interesting nature (English, French, German and Italian) may be forwarded to the Central News Agency, Ltd. (wholesale book depot in Risik Street, two doors from Fox Street), which has kindly consented to receive any parcels addressed to me.

It should be unnecessary to state that any attempt to use this means as a channel of communication with prisoners will lead to the withdrawal of the privilege.—I am, etc.,

GEO. A. HAY.
Johannesburg, August 27.

Rand Daily Mail 29 August 1914.

SERVIANS AT THE SHOWGROUND!

To the Editor.

Sir,—It has been drawn to my notice that the authorities are confining in the Show Ground Camp certain people who strictly speaking are of Austrian nationality. They are, however, of that nationality much against their will. It is a well known fact that with Austrian aggression in the past certain provinces, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Bokacataro, have against their wishes been included in the Austrian nation. The individuals of these provinces would welcome the day when they should become free from the military tyranny characteristic of Germany and Austria. Surely the authorities can make inquiries before consigning these people to imprisonment. More than one person of pure Servian origin is now confined who cannot speak a word of German, and that appears a hardship which could be remedied.—I am, etc.,

P. S. THOMAS.
Roodepoort, August 31.

Rand Daily Mail 2 September 1914.



Johannesburg transit camp, Agricultural Showground.
Südafrikas Deutsche in englischer Gewalt, 1916.

ARREST

ACTIVITY

Who was arrested and who was not? Do you think the criteria were fair and appropriate for the situation?

How would you feel if one of your parents was arrested by the police just for holding the wrong passport?

Do you think women and children should have been interned as well?



Arrival in Fort Napier.



Pretoria transit camp, Roberts Heights military base.
Südafrikas Deutsche in englischer Gewalt, 1916.

TELEGRAM:

The Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa
(Sent 5.25 p.m. 14th May, 1915)

Your telegrams 14th May proposals of His Majesty's Government with regard to enemy aliens as stated by Prime Minister yesterday are as follows -

(a) non naturalised aliens. It is proposed that prima facie all adult males should be segregated and interned or if over military age repatriated. It is recognised that there will be cases calling for exceptional treatment. Women and children of suitable age will be repatriated, but no doubt in many instances justice and humanity will require that they should be allowed to remain.

(b) naturalised aliens will be generally presumed prima facie to be loyal but exceptional cases will be specially dealt with. There must be power of internment in cases of proved necessity or danger.

Advisory body of judicial character will be set up to determine exceptional cases in both classes.

Headmaster

Mr Shrive wrote to my father informing him that, on account of my German background, he thought it desirable for me to be withdrawn from his school. It meant the end of my career at PTPS School. Like most German Jews of those days, our sympathies were with the Fatherland, and in our unsophisticated world very few made much secret of this. Among our German friends many were interned and sent to the camp at Fort Napier, Pietermaritzburg. Fortunately, however, my father, though born in Hanover, had been naturalised at the Cape in 1900, and still had his passport, signed by Lord Lansdowne as British Foreign Secretary, which referred to him as a British subject. When, therefore, the Police arrived to investigate his background, he produced this document and they went away satisfied

Child's eyewitness report. Fintel Collection.

One evening, two plain clothes men came for Dad. As an enemy alien he was sent to an internment camp at Fort Napier in Pietermaritzburg. Dad had suffered for a long time with his stomach and after only a few months he became seriously ill.

From H. Kaye, Biography of Bruno Schlesinger.

Another interesting arrest is that of the chauffeur of the Prime Minister. He has been arrested as a prisoner of war, being a German, and is being sent to the prisoner of war camp.

LIFE IN FORT NAPIER INTERNMENT CAMP

ACTIVITY

Research the lives of men and women in the camp using the texts and images on the following pages.

What were the conditions in the camp?

How many men shared a hut?

Was it healthy?

How did they pass the time?

What was their contact with the outside world?

The prisoners themselves saw their experience in a much more negative light than the reports by American camp inspectors. How do you explain this difference?

What was the role of blacks in the camp? What does this say about race relations? In a camp in South West Africa, Kanus, an inmate found that the use of prisoner labour was 'a disgrace to a nation laying claim to civilisation, and lowering the prestige of the white man, by extracting manual labour from civil POWs [...] while idle natives are looking on.'
(National Archives London).



FORT NAPIER IN WORLD WAR I

At the start of the war, the men were sent to a make-shift camp at the Royal Agricultural Grounds in Johannesburg. From here they were moved to Robert's Heights in Pretoria but when rebels from the 1914 Afrikaner rebellion needed to be imprisoned in Pretoria it was felt best to move the enemy aliens away. Fort Napier in Pietermaritzburg had been a British garrison fort before 1914. When the regiment was moved to the European Western Front after the outbreak of war, the barracks were turned into an internment camp.

Fort Napier was the main camp in the Union of South Africa, holding up to 2,600 prisoners. They were farmers, artisans, merchants, hotel employees, chefs, hairdressers, seamen, miners, engineers, architects, teachers, missionaries, pastors, doctors, dentists and pharmacists. Over 2,000 of them were German, others were Austro-Hungarian, Turkish, and naturalised British. Some of the internees were prisoners, including women and children, who had been deported from South West Africa, Rhodesia, Belgian Congo and German East Africa. The prisoners were eventually released in 1919 and many were deported to Germany.

The treatment of internees in the camp was relatively fair. There was no mistreatment and food rations were sufficient. However, the monotony of life there, separated from family and friends, worrying about businesses and livelihoods, and with no idea when they might be released was very damaging to mental health. This was described as 'barbed wire disease'. Internees showed remarkable resilience in the face of their situation. A range of activities helped them to cope with boredom and the experience of powerlessness common to prisoners.



Images from Fintel collection.

AMERICAN CONSULS WERE ALLOWED TO INSPECT THE CAMP AND WRITE REPORTS (FOUND IN GERMAN FEDERAL ARCHIVE)

10176
3136
d/

Abschrift zu IIIb 50278.

Report on the only Internment Camp in the Union of South Africa,
by George H. Murphy, American Consul-General, Cape Town.

1. Name of Camp: Prisoners-of-War Internment Camps, Fort Napier, Pietermaritzburg, Natal. (Prisoners were first brought to Pietermaritzburg on October 25, 1914.)
2. Date of Visit: August 3 to 7, 1916.
3. Direction: Lieutenant-Colonel W. Manning, Commandant. Lieut.-Col. Hamilton Fowle, Commissioner for Enemy Subjects, Pretoria.
4. Location: The camps occupy the crest of a hill above the neighboring town of Pietermaritzburg. From the camps, which are about 2000 feet above sea-level, there is a wide view of the hills and valleys of this beautiful section of Natal.
5. Climate: While the climate of Durban, the nearest seaport, is almost tropical, that of the camp is, owing to the elevation, mild and beautiful. This is apparent in the appearance of most of the interned men. There is nevertheless complaint that, at times, the weather is moist and chilly, and that this is unfavorable for men suffering with miners' and ordinary phthisis, asthma, and certain other diseases. In general, however, as has been stated above, the great majority of the men seem to be in good health, in spite of a long and depressingly monotonous internment.
6. Prisoners: No captured military or naval prisoners are now interned in these Camps, which are five in number. A few retired officers

5820.

ing and wood-carving, their products being both ingenious and artistic. Others avoid destitution by performing services for their more fortunately placed fellow-prisoners, such as acting as barbers, washing clothes, preparing baths, etc. In a restaurant in Camp 2 I dined very satisfactorily one evening with several of the prisoners, the proprietor, waiter, and cook all being interned men. There is also a small café in this camp, the proprietor of which is a Turk.

connected with hot water installation. Small amount charged for hot baths by the prisoners who prepare them (they earn a little pocket-money in this way from those who can afford to pay).

(g) Kitchen: 60 by 12 feet. Wood and iron building, with brick floor. Drainage connected with sewer. Cooking appliances: 20 portable boilers and 4 steamers. Staff: 1 white supervising cook, 2 Indians, 6 natives, and 2 prisoners.

Camp 2.

(a) Camp-Captain: Mr. Hellmann.

(b) Area: 1046 by 580 feet, including recreation grounds.

(c) Men: 717.

(d) Buildings: 15 barracks similar to those in Camp 1.

(e) Sleeping Accommodations: Similar to Camp 1.

(f) Sanitary Arrangements: Similar to Camp 1. 14 water-closets and 4 urinals; 10 shower and 2 tub baths; 4 long wash-tables.

(g) Kitchen: Similar to Camp 1. Staff: 1 white cook, 7 natives, and 2 prisoners.

Camp 3.

(a) Camp-Captain: Mr. Braun. (There are some men in this camp of a rougher and less reasonable class than are those in Camps 1, 2, and 4.)

(b) Area: 845 by 435 feet, including recreation grounds.

(c) Men: 387.

(d) Buildings: 2 wood and iron buildings 300 by 50 feet, with wooden floors; 1 brick building 400 by 50 feet, divided into 4 rooms; cement or concrete floors.

(e) Sanitary Arrangements: 2 wood and iron wash-houses, 50 by

ing and wood-carving, their products being both ingenious and artistic. Others avoid destitution by performing services for their more fortunately placed fellow-prisoners, such as acting as barbers, washing clothes, preparing baths, etc. In a restaurant in Camp 2 I dined very satisfactorily one evening with several of the prisoners, the proprietor, waiter, and cook all being interned men. There is also a small café in this camp, the proprietor of which is a Turk.

12. Exercise and Recreation: Owing to the mildness of the local climate, out-door life is possible throughout most of the year. This, no doubt, accounts largely for the good health of most of the men, in spite of their long and wearisome confinement. I am informed by the Camp Commandant that there have been only 21 deaths (including one suicide) in the camps during the nearly two years of their existence.

In spite of the complaint in Camp 3 that much rheumatism has resulted from the cold and sometimes damp concrete floors of some of the barracks, the Camp Medical Officer and the Commandant both stated that there have been fewer hospital cases from Camp 3 than from any of the other Camps.

In the matter of recreations, there are tennis courts and ten-pin alleys in Camps 1 to 4; and each camp has a small theatre in which the performances are often open to all free of charge. This affords diversion and amusement even to the absolutely destitute. The orchestral music is excellent. There are also foot-ball games, with occasional matches between players from different camps, when the Commandant permits as many as thirty
prisoners

so it might be enumerated interminably, but there are no reasonable grounds of complaints against the authorities of things of a serious nature. ~~The conditions at~~

OBSERVATIONS. Under the head of complaints I have about exhausted my general observations, but I will say this in closing. The Commandant has been most willing and obliging at all times to afford me every privilege of exhaustive inspections on both of my visits, and I have been allowed to converse with the prisoners individually, and in numbers, without supervision and restraint, and whenever a prisoner writes his grievances to me, a privilege he has, the mentioning of the complaint to the authorities later would bring a correction if, the complaint was well founded. As a rule the men interned are exceedingly well, and in good spirits, and on the whole I am inclined to think they are satisfied with their condition, and accept the inevitable good naturedly. ~~These few will suffer unless further aid is~~
RELIEF. It is not prisoners who are in need of attention and relief as are the unfortunate women and children, the wives and children of those who are interned, they are the ones that most particularly need attention and relief. The local Government has provided for some half a dozen of such families by sending them to a nearby monastery run by some Catholic fathers, and upon these persons an allowance is made for their upkeep of one shilling a day for the women and sixpence a day for the children, but this only covers the actual food and lodging and no particular provision has been made for clothing, medicines, and other necessary expenses. There are also a considerable number of families living back in the country with people of German descent not interned, and these people are being kept where there is no money to pay without cost, or at a

COPY.

FORT NAPIER (NATAL).

July, 1917.

The Right Honourable

The Prime Minister of the
Union of South Africa.

Sir,

Now that you - as the highest official of the Union - are here to see for yourself under what conditions we have spent three miserable years of our lives, we are hoping that our lot will be made more bearable.

Need we really tell you, General, that we came to this country, not as spies and plotters, but as industrious, law-abiding people who thought they could make their home without becoming disloyal to the land of their birth and who never interfered in politics.

Our liberty, the safety of our families and property we considered protected by international treaties, and also by the clauses of the British constitution which granted safe conduct and reciprocal treatment to foreign merchants in time of war.

We thought that within the British realm nobody could be deprived of his liberty without a fair trial, and that we could rely upon international law being respected there, especially as the laws regarding resident enemy nationals had been recognized in all recent wars since 1803.

Our feeling of security was still further enhanced by the traditional hands of sympathy which before the war existed between the Boer population and the German people. Have we not given proof to you personally, General, that this sympathy was strong in the heart of every German?

But what has actually been the treatment meted out to us? Almost immediately on the outbreak of hostilities the majority of us who obediently reported to the Magistrate were rushed into ill-prepared concentration camps, long before

/Germany

AFTER PRIME MINISTER BOTHA HAD VISITED THE CAMP THE PRISONERS WROTE TO HIM:

- 2 -

Germany took any similar step.

Their families were terrorised and their property destroyed by the mob, partly within close proximity of the Police Stations. The rigorous application of the Enemy Trading Act threatens to ruin what is left of their life's labour.

Like dangerous animals the men are kept within iron walls, crowded together more than in the worst slums of the world.

No physical or mental work is possible here and yet how much work could be done by us in this beautiful country.

For three dreary years we could not speak or write one private word to our own wives and children. The pittance which the Government allows for the support of our families will not keep the wolf from the door. Will it preserve the honour of our family life?

General, what God has joined no man shall put asunder! Why should the Government step between husbands and wives, between fathers and children, ruining the former mentally and physically and the latter morally. This will be one of the greatest crimes ever known in history.

All other countries and especially Germany have endeavoured to improve the conditions of the civilian prisoners by finding work for them outside the camps, granting leave to visit their families, etc. Shall it be said after the war that the treatment in South Africa has been the most inhuman of all?

It is against the laws of humanity, against the traditional laws of hospitality which even savages respect that we are interned; it is only done to effect our ruin because we could do no harm outside even if we tried.

We can bear this no longer, General, we must have our freedom back.

We have prepared once more a detailed statement of our treatment from the beginning of our complaints, but what we want above anything else is:-



Choral Society.



Christmas 1914.



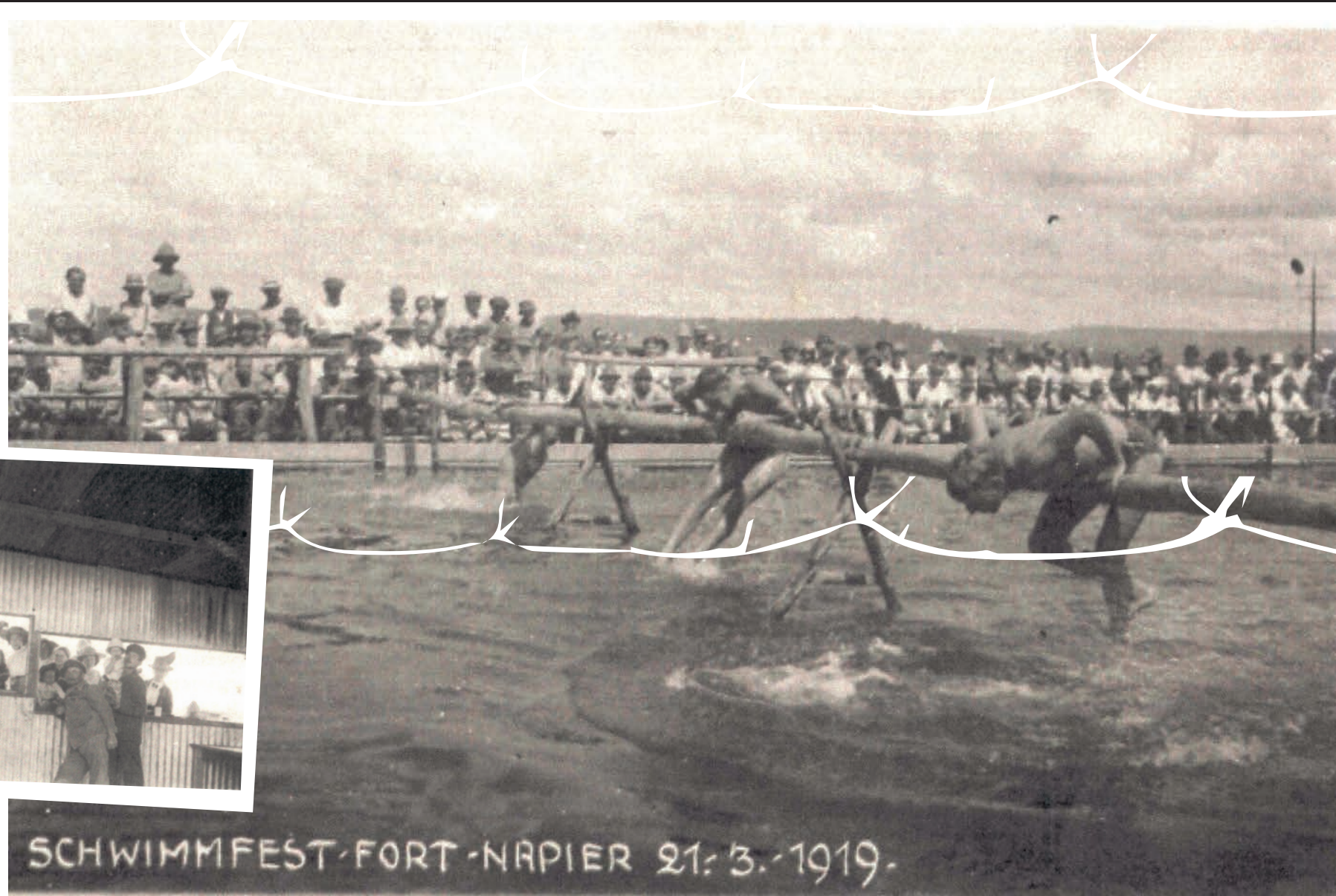
Lunch.



Religious Service.

The images on the following pages are from Fintel Collection and from Hertha Brodersen Manns, *Wie alles anders kam in Afrika, Windhoek 2000.*

Swimming competition.



Deportees from German Southwest Africa were interned in 1915. Women and men were accommodated separately but were allowed to meet in this hut.



Handicraft produced by prisoners and sold outside the camp. *Kamp Industrie*.



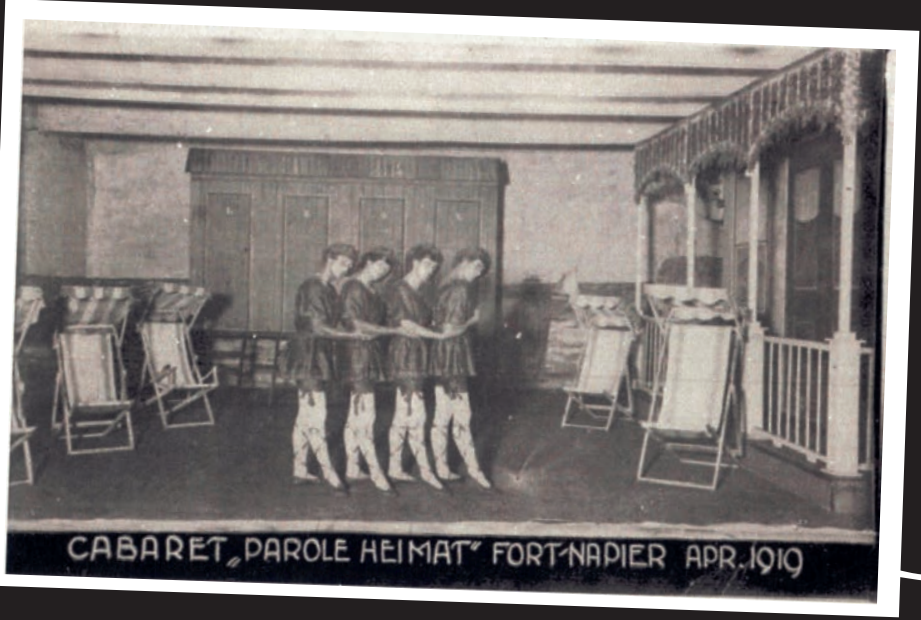
Gymnastics.



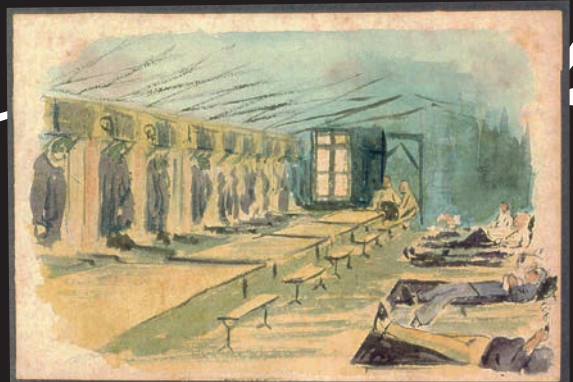
Playing cards (<https://transcribathon.com/>).



Football Team.



Theatre Society. Men played women's roles.

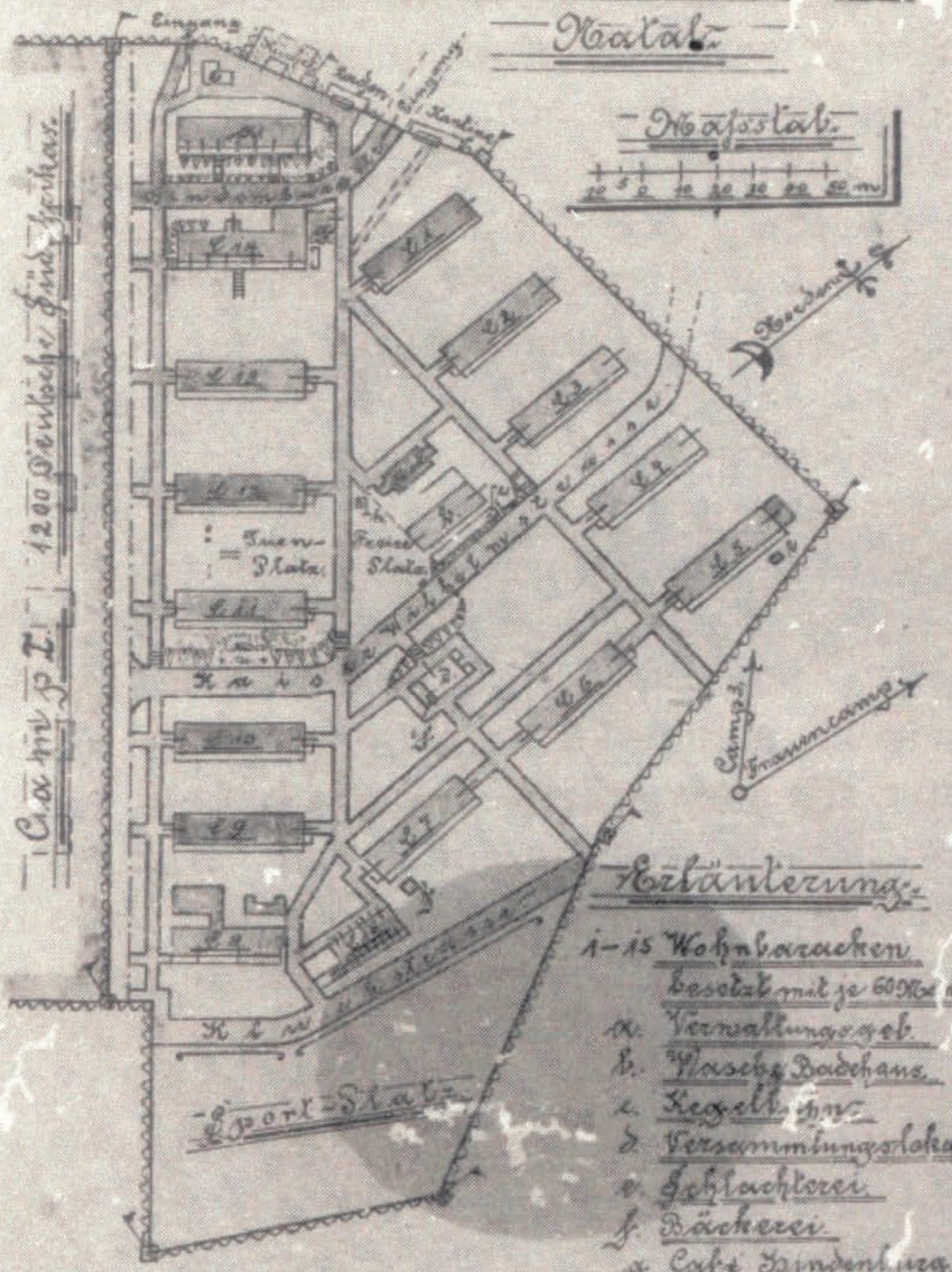


Watercolours by Hugo Bode.

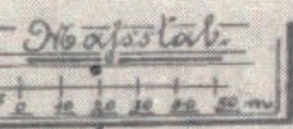


Camp II.

Fort Kaspien, Pietermaritzburg.



Kaspien



Kurzbeschreibung

- 1-15 Wohnbaracken
besetzt mit je 600 Mann
- a. Verwaltungsgeb.
- b. Wasche, Badehaus.
- c. Kegelbahn
- d. Versammlungslokal
- e. Schlachtere
- f. Bäckerei
- g. Café, Soldatenkneipe
- h. Postenstände
- i. Signal-Station

Fort Kaspien, im April 1915

Camp plan, drawn by an internee. Fintel collection.



Recreation Hall.

LETTERS AND ART

ACTIVITY

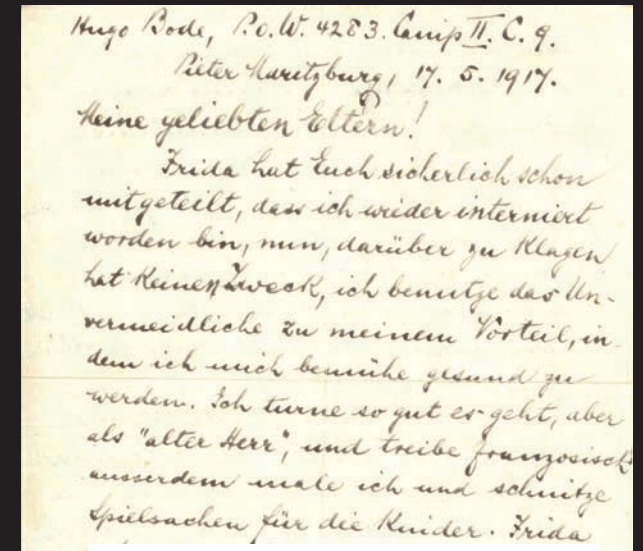
Using what you have learned about the camp, imagine you are an internee and write a letter home to your family, telling them about life in the camps.

Teacher's note: Letters from the camps were censored. Let pupils write their letter, then censor it and tell them what sort of things they are not allowed to say, for example any mention of food not being good, or conditions being poor.

AND / OR

Write a diary entry describing a day of your life in the camp: where you live, what you eat, how you passed the time that day and how you felt at the end of the day.

Teacher's note: Diaries were not censored. As prisoners did not leave the camp they could write freely about conditions and how they felt.



My beloved parents!
(my wife) Frieda has probably told you that I have been interned again. Well, there is no point in complaining about it, I have made the inevitable to my advantage by getting healthy. I do gymnastics as well as I can, but as an 'old gentleman', and I'm doing French, painting, and carving toys for the kids.

Hugo Bode, POW 4283, Camp II, C9
Pietermaritzburg, 17.5.1917

Extracts from internees' letters and diaries translated into English.
Fintel Collection.

Hugo Bode, 4283, Camp II, C. 9, P. Maritzburg
 Natal, 21/6/17
 Meine geliebten Eltern,
 Zuletzt schrieb ich Euch am 17 Mai, hoffentlich
 habt Ihr den Brief erhalten, das Leben im Lager ist
 sehr einörmig, fast ein Tag wie der andere, und
 vergeht die Zeit rasend, sodass nun wieder fünf
 Monate vergangen sind seit meiner Internierung
 am 21. Feb. Das Essen ist ganz leidlich, was ich auch
 sagen kann ist wohl Milch u. Butter u. Käse, die

mir muss ich immer noch Medizin nehmen u. die schlimm-
 ste Zeit ist wenn ich mich zum Schlafen legen, da schlei-
 chen die ganzen Gedanken sich zu bewegen um mich
 in eine veränderte Lage zu schieben, das macht mich
 nervös, aber ich schlafe meistens schnell ein und
 die Nacht durch. Frieda wohnt nun noch in dem Haus
 welches wir uns im Dec. gemietet u. für welches wir wieder
 Möbel angeschaffen mussten, es geht ihr u. den Kindern gut,
 die Kinder machen uns jetzt viel Freude, sie bemühen
 sich trotz meiner Abwesenheit recht artig zu sein.

My last letter to you was on 17 May, I hope you have received it. Life in the camp is very monotonous, every day is like the previous day, and time flies so that five months have already passed since my internment on 21 Feb. Food is acceptable, in addition I buy milk and fruit and cold meat.... I still have to take my medicine. The worst time is when I go to bed. All my intestines seem to move around and be in a different position. That makes me nervous, but nevertheless I fall asleep quickly and sleep through the night. Frieda still lives in the house we rented in December and for which we had to buy furniture. She and the children are fine. The children make us very happy. They try to be well behaved despite my absence.

Hugo Bode, 4283, Camp II, C. 9, P. Maritzburg Natal, 21.6.1917

Paul Hummel, 2573 Camp II C. 9. P.M. Burg. S.A.
 12/9/17
 Liebe Eltern, Vaters lieber Brief den ich schon beantwortet

sich hier unthätig im Fernen Lande unser
 Familienglück getrübt unser Wohlstand ge-
 brochen und keine Aussicht auf nahen
 Frieden, dabei können keine freundigen Gedan-
 ken aufkommen wenn auch die Nachrichten

noch so gut sind, aber immer wieder kommt die
 Hoffnung a sagt: Bald Bald muss doch das Ende
 kommen. Viele sind nun schon 4 jhre lang nicht aus
 der Lagerzäunung her aus gekommen, es ist ein Wunder
 das trotz dem der Gesundheitszustand verhältnismä-
 ßig gut ist. Zur Unterhaltung u. Zerstreuung wird viel
 gespielt, zu Weihnachten hatten wir eine großartige
 Performance, bei der viel Kampf Talent zum Vorschein kam,

Dear Parents, ... we are forced to be idle here in a distant country. Our family joy and our wealth are gone. There is no imminent prospect of peace. This does not allow for joyous thoughts, even when some news are positive, but again and again hope arises and says: Soon soon the end must come. Many have not been beyond the fence for 4 years, it is a miracle that our state of health is relatively good. We organise much entertainment and distraction. For Christmas we had a fabulous performance which displayed much talent in the camp.

Paul Hummel, 2573 Camp II C. 9, P.M. Burg. S.A., 10/1/18

Paul Hummel, 2573 Camp II C. 9. Fort Napier
 Pietermaritzburg S.A.
 26/8/1918
 Lieber Karl! Deinen lieben Brief vom 3ten Juni erhielt
 ich Anfang letzter Woche, es war eine Überraschung u.
 hat mir viel zu danken gegeben. Ich habe gehofft dass
 wir uns bald wieder sehen würden, aber aus der Repatri-
 rung scheint nichts zu werden, wer Schuld daran trägt, lässt
 sich weder von hier, wo man von der Welt abgeschnitten ist
 u. nur eine gewisse Presse in die Hände bekommt zu beur-
 teilen noch würde es wegen der Besatzung angebracht sein. Zu

Dear Karl!
 Beginning of last week I received your dear letter from 3 June. It was a surprise which gave me much to think about. I had hoped that we would see each other soon, but repatriation now does not seem to go ahead. From here within the camp it is impossible to say who is responsible for this, because one is cut off from the world and can only read a certain type of press. It is also impossible to say here because of the censor.

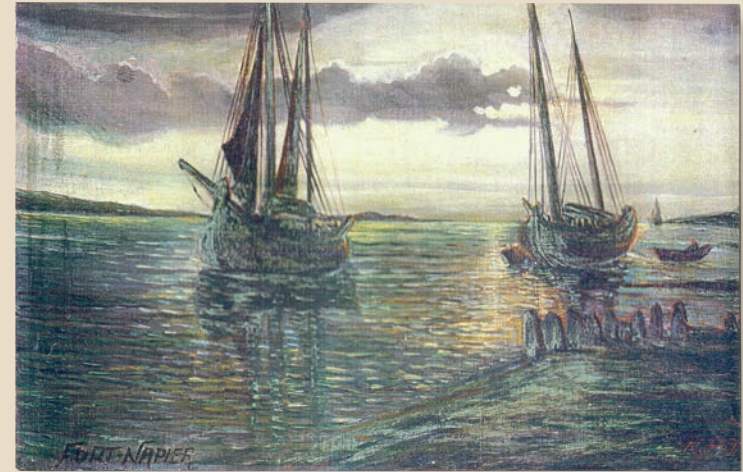
Paul Stumme, 2573, Camp II, C9 Fort Napier Pietermaritzburg, SA 26/8/1918

ACTIVITY

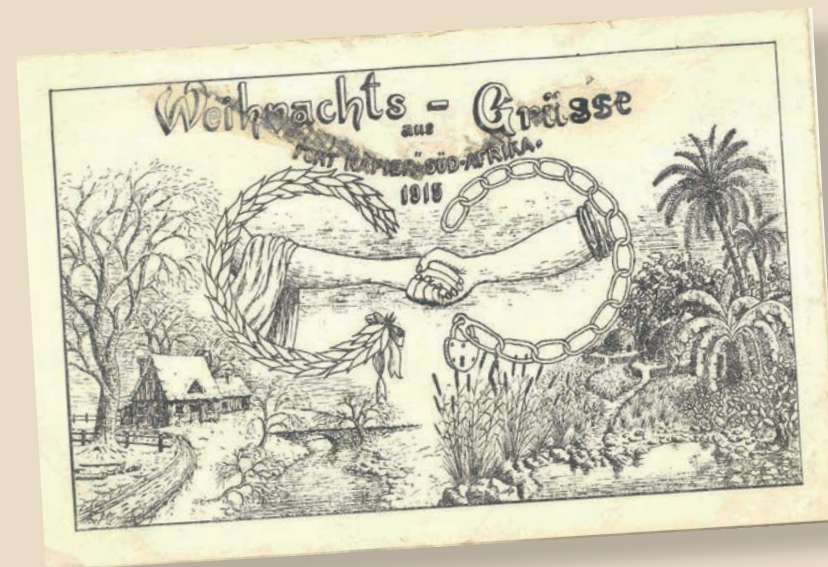
Imagine you are a prisoner. Produce works of art about your captivity that reflect your mindset. Be inspired by the texts and images in this booklet. The examples on the next two pages might give you some inspiration.

HERE ARE THINGS YOU CAN DO:

- Design a postcard to send home to your family, writing a short message to them on the back of it.
- Design the cover of a camp magazine.
- Write a poem or song.
- Make a painting. What does the painting on the right represent?



R Pohl 1916.



Christmas Greetings. Fintel Collection.

From camp newspaper Der Hunne, in National Military History Museum of South Africa, Michael Bentz Collection.



Translation: Happy New Year! At the end of his life the poor chap went mad. <https://transcribathon.com/>



PRISONER OF WAR

The only thing you can imprison is the body,
you can keep it down with shackles,
remove it into the blue distance
of fatherland and child and spouse.

You cannot imprison the spirit,
not with the gates of your dungeon
can you stop the thought
which whirls round the free air.

You cannot imprison the heart,
and stand in the way
which it daily takes towards the homeland,
with burning desire.

You cannot imprison the consolation,
with which my home and hearth greets me
like a breath of homeland earth
raging around my wrinkled cheeks.

By Ludwig Fulda,
a German poet

Kriegsgefangen.
Fangen könnt ihr nur den Leib,
Könnt mit Fesseln ihn bedrücken,
Ihm in blaue Ferne rücken
Vaterland und Kind und Weib.
Fangen könnt ihr nicht den Geist,
Nicht mit euren Kerkerstrahlen
Halt gebieten dem Gedanken,
Der in freien Lüften kreist.
Fangen könnt ihr nicht das Herz,
Könnt ihm nicht den Weg vermauern,
Den's mit heißen Sehnsuchtschauern
Täglich wandert heimatwärts.
Fangen könnt ihr nicht den Trost
Der im Gruß von Haus und Herde
Wie ein Hauch der Heimerde
Um gefurchte Wangen kost.
Ludwig Fulda.

DREI JAHRE!
Drei Jahre sind lei: Die Kriegedrommete gellt,
Begeisterung droeben leht in hellen Flammen,
Bekämpfen gilt's von Feinden eine Welt...
Und draussen uns schauert Gram das Herz zusammen:
Denn ob hierher Dein Ruf die Wege fand
Und uns die Brust durchdrang mit heil'gen Schauern,
Wir konnten Dir nicht dienen, Vaterland,
-Unwürdige Last- wir mussten hinter Mauern!

THREE YEARS!

It has been three years. The war trumpet sounds shrill,
Enthusiasm at home blazes in bright flames,
The fight is against a world of enemies.
And out there our grief wrings our hearts:
Although your call resounds over here
And gives our chest a sacred shuddering,
We cannot serve you, fatherland.
Undignified fate! We have perished behind walls!

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY

Do your own research on::

- Robben Island. What were the similarities and differences between internment in the First World War and during the Apartheid years?
- The Lindela Detention Centre near Johannesburg. How does South Africa treat asylum seekers today?
- In 2008, 'more than 60 people were reported killed and thousands displaced in xenophobic attacks in South Africa.' [bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-47800718] How did these attacks compare with those of the 1915 attacks following the sinking of the Lusitania?
- Racial classification in South Africa. How has racial classification changed and how has race been used to discriminate against people since the end of the First World War?

FURTHER INFORMATION, IMAGES AND SOURCES

Links:

www.stobscamp.org
<https://www.knockaloe.im/>

Exhibition catalogue:

Behind the Wire. Civilian Internment in the British Empire 1914-1919 (Hawick: Internment Research Centre, 2018), ISBN 9-781916-051218

Literature:

Graham Dominy, *Last Outpost on the Zulu Frontiers. Fort Napier and the British Imperial Garrison* (Urbana Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016)

Graham Dominy, Dieter Reusch, *Handicrafts, Philanthropy and Self-help. The Fort Napier Kamp-Industrie during World War I*, Natal Museum Journal of Humanities 5 (1993).

Stefan Manz, Panikos Panayi, *Enemies in the Empire. Civilian Internment in the British Empire during the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2020).

Stefan Manz, Tilman Dederling, *Enemy Aliens in Wartime. Civilian Internment in South Africa during World War I*, South African Historical Journal 68, 2016.

Anne Samson, *World War I in Africa. The Forgotten Conflict among the European Powers* (London: Tauris 2013).

**THIS EDUCATION RESOURCE
IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:**

www.stobscamp.org/IRC

