

THE AGENCY'S GAZETTE

1870-2020

150 YEARS FIGHTING FOR MORE HUMANITY IN WAR

3 March 1941, the first time in...

... Australia

Bound for Australia | Having settled in Australia in July 1940, Georges Morel became an ICRC delegate there in December of the same year. His journey to Australia was no doubt better than that of the German and Austrian civilian internees whom he first visited at Hay Internment Camp on 3 March 1941. Most of them were Jewish refugees who had been transferred from Britain to Australia as "enemy aliens". Their seemingly endless journey on the HMT Dunera lasted 57 days, and they were subjected to terrible physical conditions and mistreatment by the British guards. During his visit, Morel expressed concern about the "less than perfect" state of the internees' clothing. This was hardly surprising given that their luggage had been thrown overboard by the guards during the journey...

Morel also expressed concern about the lack of correspondence. He noted that the internees "generally did not receive news from their families" and that they "preferred to write to them through the International Red Cross because they did not know where their relatives were living". They therefore hoped that the ICRC could help them find family members from whom they had been separated during the war.



Delegate G. Morel

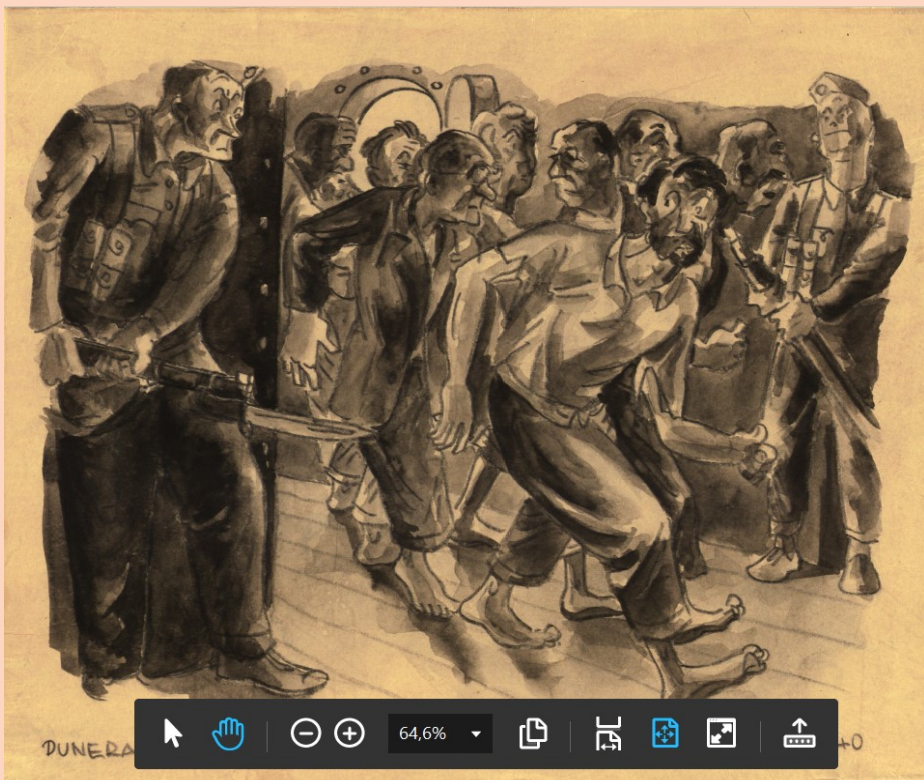
Well-organized internees | Morel did however find that camp life was very well organized, with a rich intellectual programme. There was an impressive library, and regular concerts and shows demonstrating "remarkable" artistic talent. A school was set up offering a wide variety of classes, including medicine, psychology and economics. After all, the internees at this camp were descendants of German and Austrian Jewish intellectuals. A couple of the more notable internees, for example, were Anton Walter Freud, Sigmund Freud's grandson, and Friedrich Schonbach, painter and caricaturist who drew his fellow internees and produced the camp newspaper.

sd: v3 | q: civil SCH O W CIA 1791
 SCHONBACH Friedrich
 Né:
 Prof:
 Dom: 16, Kenneth Crescent-London.
 Dok:
 Dem: Schonbach Eduard Leo, Tucuman 1128 (Argentine)
 3.9.40 Inq. 3 Londres.

ACICR

Individual card of F. Schonbach, civilian internee

Following a change of policy by the British government regarding "enemy aliens", the internees were released at the end of 1941, and around half the group stayed in Australia. ■ IME, DPM & DGN



From the Collection of the Archive of Australian Judaica. Fritz Schonbach Dunera - Exercise (Hay Internment Camp), 1940 Pencil and Watercolour on Paper