

The beginning of September 1939 found me in Maidenhead again, standing on the platform of the Railway Station. I had volunteered when the War started to help in the evacuation of children from London, and this I did in Maidenhead where I could stay with the Oldershaws very cheaply. It was not real work carrying a few suitcases and passing on children to lady volunteers who took them to their homes for ‘the duration’, as the war was then euphemistically called.

By then my father had finally succeeded in leaving Germany and had settled in England. He was at first staying with a friend of his in Buckland Crescent, in London’s Hampstead. As I had no job and no income, and as he had for the third time in his life lost all his savings, we were both glad that he had found a home he liked. The first time he lost all his money was at the end of W.W.I when the German war loans became worthless. The second time was during the hyper-inflation of 1922, and the third time when the Nazis allowed him to leave Germany, only on the condition that all his capital in the bank was transferred to a Nazi nominee. [See Titles 425-427]

As a fully qualified medical doctor, but not allowed to practise medicine in England, he was obliged to find a job with a Refugee Organisation which had created a camp for German Jewish children, who had been allowed to come to England without their parents. The Camp, near Norwich, Norfolk, on the East Coast of England, was a large farm which had been converted to house about 350 children. There my father had a few rooms for living and for his practice. As in Berlin he had practised as a paediatrician he was reasonably content. A sad end, however, to his medical career, when among his friends in Berlin he had looked after many distinguished patients, as for example all the Mendelssohn family.

I visited him in the Camp as often as I could, and in the Spring of 1940, when the ‘phony war’ had stopped and shooting had started, I was with him at the Camp. Hitler’s Blitzkrieg had just overrun The Netherlands and Belgium, following the plan of General Schlieffen, unsuccessfully tried in W.W.I. Now, in 1940, German armies succeeded and stood at the Channel Ports opposite England. The British Expeditionary Forces had to be evacuated back to England from Dunkirk and not surprisingly the British Cabinet was obsessed by fear that Hitler would soon attempt to invade England. One of the actions taken was the immediate internment of all “Enemy Aliens” as the Cabinet was afraid of a repetition of the ‘Fifth Column’ which had helped Franco to capture Madrid during the Spanish Civil War in 1936.