

Internment — My Father's tragic Death — Release Title 21

This was official, and in far-away Canada I could only wonder of what disease my father had died so suddenly. The true facts of the case became only clear to me weeks after my release from Internment and return to London. Soon after my dramatic removal from the Camp in Norfolk on Whit Sunday 1940, my father too left Norfolk and returned to London where he lived in the private boarding house which had given him shelter and home, when he arrived from Berlin.

As it was customary in England throughout the years of World War II, the BBC transmitted at 9 o'clock in the evening the main news of the day. And so on 4 July 1940 as always, my father listened to the radio and heard a news item that the *Aran-dora Star* had been sunk in the Irish Sea during the day and that no survivors had been rescued. From the Isle of Man camp, a few days earlier, I had sent my father a telegram that I would shortly be on my way to Canada and he was able to reply in time, giving me names and addresses of his friends in the USA who might be able to help me. This was his last message to me and I still treasure it today.

I can only conclude that my father assumed that I had been on board the *Aran-dora Star* and had been drowned. At the age of 64, penniless in a foreign country, a widower and his only son dead, with the possibility of himself being interned, he must have felt that there was nothing left for him in life and he committed suicide. On his death certificate, it is stated that two Coroners Inquests had been held, and that the cause of death was 'Luminal poisoning, did kill himself while of unsound mind' as determined by post-mortem. (*Luminal* was a pheno-barbiturate sleeping drug in those days and must have been easily available to him in Berlin before he left for England). This tragic story of my father's death was raised in the British House of Commons and also referred to in an issue of *The Liberal Magazine* here reproduced. [See Title 21 A]

On 15 October 1940 we were transferred from Camp L to Camp N, an empty locomotive shed in Sherbrooke which could easily be heated during the coming Canadian Winter. From there the Cambridge Group and some others were released, and I hoped that the death of my father had some effect on British public opinion. Sir Alexander Patterson, one of H.M. Commissioners of Prisons, was appointed to act and he arrived at Camp N soon afterwards. Walter Wallich was his Godson and these two went through a list of internees and decided who could be immediately returned to England. As soon as the Canadian Military Authorities could arrange it, about 50 internees, including myself, were moved by train to Halifax and hence by sea in convoy back to Liverpool.

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