

From West Africa to West Indies: the Movement of German and Italian Internees in the British Empire during World War II, 1939-45

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Abstract. Wars lead to disruptions in the relationships of the belligerent countries. As soon as hostilities are declared, all interactions between citizens of hostile territories cease. The declaration of a state of war culminates in a prohibition of commercial intercourse between the subjects of the contending powers. It also leads to the proscription and unpleasant treatments of the citizens of the hostile countries. This study, therefore, examines the treatment of the enemy aliens in British Empire during the Second World War, with a special focus on the transfer of the German and Italian internees from Nigeria in West Africa to Jamaica in West Indies. It also deals with the representations by several individuals and agencies in connection with the internees in Jamaica, as well as their enlistment in the British Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. Archival sources provide data for this historical reconstruction. It is a contribution to knowledge in the areas of Second World War, German Studies, treatment of the enemy aliens, and the place of West Africa in the historiography of World War II.

Keywords: German/Italian Internees, Prisoners of War, West Africa, West Indies, British Empire, Second World War

1. Introduction

In law, the declaration of war makes enemies of all the respective subjects of the belligerents (EMB 1917: 104). This was the case during the First and Second World Wars. The belligerent countries put legislations in place (such as Trading with the Enemy Act in Britain and America) outlining the modalities for dealing with the enemy countries, their subjects

and properties in the continuance of the war (Levey and Barbieri, Croft 1989; White 1900; Bishop 1948).

Earlier studies on the treatment of enemy subjects in the British Empire during the Second World War have omitted the West African case study. For instance, several attempts have been made to address the treatment of the enemy subjects/internees (Fry 2000, Koessler 1942, Kertesz 1992, Pistol 2015, Schenderlin 2017, Clark 2018, Poole 1982, Johnston 2000, Fiset 2003, Macmillan 1985, Christagau 2009) as well as prisoners of war (POWs) (Custodis 2011, Jackson 2010, Custodis 2012, Auger 2005, Robin 1995, Mackenzie 1994) during the Second World War. Specific studies have been carried out on the treatment of German Prisoners of War, most especially in America, during World War II (Reiss 2005, Krammer 1990, Thompson 2010, Pluth 1970). However, in all these conversations, there is an area that has escaped notice, namely, the treatment of the German internees in British West Africa during the Second World War.

This study seeks to address the lopsidedness in the historiography of the treatment of the German and Italian internees in British Empire during World War II by examining the transfer to Jamaica in West Indies of the German Internees in West Africa during the Second World War. It also deals with the representations made by several agencies in connection with the internees in Jamaica, as well as their enlistment in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps. The history of the internment of German subjects in West Africa (most especially in Nigeria and the Cameroons under the British Mandate) is provided as a background.

The study relies essentially on the primary sources for its analysis. Files of the Chief Secretary's Office (CSO) on the enemy subjects provide the data for the historical reconstruction. The significance of the contribution of this study lies in expanding the discussion on the impact of World War II on the international integration by focusing on the somewhat neglected theme, namely, the treatment of the alien enemies in British Empire, as it affected West Africa with a special emphasis on the transfer of the German internees from West Africa to Jamaica. It is a contribution to knowledge in the areas of Second World War, German Studies, the treatment of the enemy aliens and the place of West African within the historiography of World War II.

2. World War II and the Internment of the Enemy Subjects in British West Africa

The Second World War (1939-1945) was an implosion between the Allied Powers (Britain, France, the USA and Russia) and the Axis (Germany, Italy and Japan). It occasioned the dislocation of the world political economy as well as global disintegration.

As soon as the War broke out, enemy aliens, most especially, German and Italian subjects in all the British colonies and Dependencies were arrested and interned as was the case during the First World War (1914-1918). This internment process and the concomitant repatriation and release on parole were supervised by the office of the Custodian of Enemy Property (C.E.P.). This internment of the enemy subject in the British Empire had been planned even before the outbreak of the war on 3 September 1939. For instance, in a secret letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government (CSG) of Nigeria to the Commissioner of the Colony (ComCol), dated 29 May 1939 (barely three months to the commencement of the war), the CSG noted that he had been directed by the Government to observe that the creation of a central internment camp was a matter for executive action (National Archives Ibadan [NAI] CSO 35769/I: 2). Some doubt existed as to the division of duties between Commissioner of the Colony and the Commissioner of Police. To clarify the position, the CSG explained that the part of Commissioner of the Colony and of the Resident of a Province as "competent authority" in respect of internment was restricted to the duties laid down in Part III of the draft Regulations. The section to be taken by the Commissioner of Police and his subordinates was indicated in broad outline in the Defence Scheme (Chapter VI, Section H) and would be implemented by him in detail subject to the

general approval of the Governor (NAI CSO 35769/I: 1). The Defence Regulations would come into force on receipt of the "war" telegram, and, detailed arrangements for carrying out their provisions should be made by all concerned in peace time, observing the strictest secrecy. In the event of the outbreak of the war before the final Regulations were issued the draft Regulations should be acted upon (NAI CSO 35769/I: 1). The control and direction of each camp and the arrest and detention of enemy aliens would, following normal practice, be a matter for the Commissioner of Police whose local representatives would work in the closest co-operation with the administrative authority (NAI CSO 35769/I: 1). The question of a central internment camp was under consideration. In September, 1939, arrangements were made to establish such an institution at Ibadan, Nigeria, and it was probable that this would also be done in a future crisis (NAI CSO 35769/I: 1-2).

In Practice, following the outbreak of the war of 3 September 1939, the Germans in Nigeria were arrested and interned at the internment camp Ibadan. Some were released on parole. To be sure, of the total 132 Germans interned in Nigeria, 79 were on parole (NAI CSO 36117/I). Sixty-three (63) German males were interned in Nigeria, excluding the Cameroons, which by then was part of Nigeria. Women and children were not interned but were permitted to accompany their menfolk if so interned. German males who were considered eligible for military service or who were possessed of certain technical qualifications were interned. No hard and fast rule was in operation as regards 'eligibility for military service', each case being considered on its merits. German males who had not been interned were on parole and had been permitted to reside in their own homes. They had not been referred to public charity. A few German males over military age were allowed to repatriate themselves at their own expense (NAI CSO 36117/I: 23). Those, who were not of military age and women, were released on parole. In this way, they would be under the surveillance by the police.

With reference to the Cameroons under the British Mandate, about 60 were reported to have gone to Fernando Po. They had left before the declaration of war. The remaining were on parole and as far as possible were being employed on plantations which the Public Custodian had taken over. However, on 19 June 1940, all the Germans in the Cameroons under Mandate were taken prisoners. Similarly, on 25 June 1940, the Germans working under the French Custodian on the Plantation de Tabac, Batschenga, French Mandated Cameroons, had been transported

to Yaunde—Duala and then by the British vessel “SABO” to Lagos; after arrival at Lagos they had been transferred by train into the British Central Internment Camp at Ibadan (NAI CSO 36117/I: 76). They included Herr Truppel & Frau Truppel, Herr Walter & Frau Walter, Herr Wiececker & Frau Wiececker, Herr Leuchs, Herr Knittl, Herr Holl, Herr Laugwitz, Herr Zabel, Herr Barthel, Her Konig, Herr Krug, Her Weber, Herr Groch (NAI CSO 36117/I: 76). All arrested enemy aliens were allowed to have in their possession personal requirements which should not exceed the amount of three pound, which was expended at the internment camp monthly for every person (NAI CSO 36117/I: 70). The internment camps were located in Lagos, Ibadan and Umuahia, from which some were later transferred either to the internment camps in the Isle of Man in the United Kingdom or Jamaica in West Indies, while some others, who had medical issues, were repatriated to Germany at their own expense.

3. The Transfer of the German and Italian Internees in West Africa to Jamaica

The presence of internees in West Africa was an embarrassment to security, and the provision of guards was an additional commitment for which the resources of the General Officer Commanding ‘Royal West African Frontier Force’ in Ashimota, Ghana, were inadequate. The provision of suitable accommodation in West Africa for Europeans was always a most difficult problem and in Sierra Leone there was none (without building) and the GOC particularly wished to avoid diverting materials and labour to the construction of internment Camps before the military needs were complete. He mostly urged, therefore, that internees were not retained in West Africa (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V: 589).

There was an arrangement for the transfer of enemy aliens from West Africa to Jamaica in West Indies. In a telegram to the Governor of Nigeria dated 6 September 1940, repeated to Governors of Freetown and Accra, the Secretary of State assumed that the Governors would arrange in consultation with the Governor of Jamaica for any outstanding cash balances due to individual internees to be transferred with them to Jamaica and made available to them for personal expenditure while interned in Jamaica (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 529). Delay in transfer of internees to Jamaica was anticipated. Several internees had been resident in West Africa for periods of exceeding 36 months and on grounds of health and climate, the Governor promised to press for early departure (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 550).

The procedure proposed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies regarding non-enemy aliens would not be practicable since it was essential that Governor, Jamaica, should make orders for transfer of any such persons who had not in fact left Nigeria as a result of deportation orders and it did not appear that there was sufficient time for this. In any case he could not agree to such procedure in the case of Czechs and Dutch without consideration of details of individual cases (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 553).

In the telegram dated 26 October 1940, the Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic wrote to the G.O.C. West Africa, repeated to Director of Nigerian Marine, Lagos, N.C.S.O. at Takoradi, West African Governors, and Command, Sierra Leone, stating that “Pennland” was available to transport these internees to Jamaica after present duties, if guard could be provided by the Nigerian Government. “Pennland” would arrive Freetown (Sierra Leone) about 2 November 1940 and could be sailed for Lagos (Nigeria) as soon as guard was embarked, arriving four days later thence to Takoradi (Ghana) and back to Freetown before proceeding to Jamaica (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 554). It was expected that internees would leave Nigeria on 6 November (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 550).

Approximately 150 internees were now at Umuahia (Nigeria) over 1,000 miles from Lagos by rail. As there was no accommodation for them at Lagos, it was essential that they should not reach Lagos before “Pennland” arrived. Rolling stock position made it impossible to get them to Lagos between 8 and 17 November (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 558). His Excellency had agreed that Col. Mavrogordato should go in charge of the Nigeria internees and he would take Capt. Blackburn and his wife with him. Having reached Jamaica and got rid of the internees Col. Mavrogordato would take his leave in the West Indies (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 559). The S.S. “Pennland” sailed from Freetown on 5 November and should arrive Lagos 9 November thence to Takoradi on 11 November (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 567).

On 9 November 1940, the Commissioner, Nigeria Police Force, wrote to the Chief Secretary to Government on board S.S. Pennland where he was awaiting the embarkation of the German Internees. He noted that the Ship was under the Dutch flag and her Captain Officers and crew were Dutch. This added to the difficulties of the voyage especially as there was a suggestion that some of the crew were likely to be of the Fifth Column. He found that there was an escort of European Troops consisting of two officers and five men of the Essex Regiment. There

was also one extra officer of the same Regiment on board who was supposed to disembark at Freetown. After taking on board the internees who would come on to the ship at Takoradi there would be something like 600 enemy aliens on board (sailing from West Africa) and he was of the opinion that the present escort was totally inadequate to efficiently guard this large number and to provide the necessary sentry posts over the ship including reliefs. Had the ship been British and British-manned the situation would not have been so serious, as they could have expected assistance which in the present circumstances was doubtful. In these circumstances, he urgently requested that His Excellency might be pleased to cable as soon as possible to the G.O.C. West Africa, recommending that on arrival of this ship at Freetown the escort might be increased by another officer and 50 more men. He called attention to the fact that among the German internees being taken, there was an ex Naval Commander as well as German ship's officers and in the event of an attempt being made to seize the ship it was doubtful whether the present escort of 50 men would be sufficient to deal with an attempt of that sort (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 568).

Concerning the number of the enemy internees taken to Jamaica from Nigeria, in a response, dated 11 November 1940, the Acting Commissioner, Nigeria Police Force provided the figures as follows:

	Germans	Italians	Totals
Males	197	27	224
Females	64	2	66
Children	38	-	38
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	299	29	328
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These internees left Lagos on Sunday, 10 November, 1940, on the S.S. "Pennland" under the charge of Col. A.S. Mavrogordato, O.B.E., Commissioner of Police, who was accompanied by Capt. G. M. I. Blackburne, M.C., Senior Asst. Superintendent of Police and Mrs. Blackburne. It was requested that details of the number of internees, including men, women and children, actually embarked should be furnished to the office of the Chief Secretary as soon as possible for transmission by cable to the Government of Jamaica (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 561-2). Among them were German Officers: 1 Captain and 3 seamen. Enemy aliens of military age (45 years or under) were: 24 Italians and 173 Germans, while suspected male and female enemy agents were 2 Italian males and 18 German males. Those who were only enemy aliens who had been interned and on whom there rests no particular

suspicion were 3 Italian male and 21 German males (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 571, 574).

The ship reached Barbados on 30 November. All well on board, expecting to disembark Jamaica on 3 December 1940 (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 561, 583). Colonel Mavrogordato reported that 399 medical treatments were given during the voyage to internees from Nigeria. The Medical Director of the ship, Dr. Frederic Herzog, claimed 5/- each for these treatments, and the amount due (£99. 15. 0) had been paid to him as an advance on account of the Nigerian Government. The Crown Agents for the Colonies should be instructed to transfer the amount from Nigerian funds to Jamaica funds (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 601).

However, not all enemy aliens in Nigeria were to be transferred to Jamaica. The three Roman Catholic missionaries, on being informed of the decision to be released on parole, petitioned through the Vicar Apostolic of Onitsha-Owerri to be permitted to proceed to Jamaica with their colleagues. The Governor granted their request and they were included in the above-mentioned numbers.

His Excellency had decided that the following enemy aliens should be permitted to remain in Nigeria on parole when the main body of internees was transferred to Jamaica: J. W. Zitterstein, Frau Zitterstein, Ludwig Gunz. He had also approved of the recommendation of the Committee appointed to consider individual cases of enemy aliens and that where any person was to be released, or any person not at present interned was to remain at large, they should each of them be requested, as a condition of their release or remaining at large, to give an undertaking in writing that they would not engage in any political, anti-British or anti-allied activity. The further recommendation, that no person released from internment should be allowed to return to the area where he was stationed, was approved.

Concerning the instruction to permit the Zittersteins and Ludwig Gunz to remain in Nigeria, the Commissioner Police consulted the General Manager of the United Africa Company in regard to posting of Herr Zitterstein and Herr Gunz. He was prepared to re-employ them, to pay their transport expenses to their new stations, and to post them to areas removed from those in which they previously served, but he was not yet in a position to say where these would be (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 575). In the letter of 16 November 1940, the Acting Commissioner of Police noted that the General MANAGER, United African Company had now informed him that he was prepared to station in Lagos Herr Gunz, who was formerly at Zaria (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940:

576). Thus, steps would be taken to released Herr Gunz after he had given a written undertaken not to engage in any political, anti-British or anti-allied activity, and he would be informed that he would be required further to comply with the provisions of the Aliens Restriction Ordinance (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 576).

In addition to the Zittersteins, the Governor had also agreed to release on strict parole Ludwig Gunz, German Jew formerly in employment of Uniafrica. Twelve German internees remain in Nigeria, 6 males, 4 females and four children. These included the Zittersteins and Ludwig Gunz, party of missionaries from Mamfe Division Cameroons whose removal to internment camp had been delayed by transport difficulties and three men who escaped from Umuahia (Walter Rapp, Fritz Dietrich and Fritz Moll) and who were recaptured and were awarded 90 days' imprisonment for escaping from lawful custody at Umuahia Internment Camp, and too late to bring them to Lagos with rest of party. The Governor trusted that an early opportunity of transferring them to Jamaica would be found (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 573). In response, the Secretary of State regretted that in the present circumstances it did not appear practicable to transfer these people direct to Jamaica and unless some unexpected opportunity for such transfer should occur, there seemed to be no alternative to their remaining where they were (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1940: 580).

4. Representations in connection with the Internees in Jamaica

There were representations about Mr. Francesco Canfailla, his wife and his mother-in-law, as well as Dr. Aub, Mrs. Weinberg, and Messrs. Hamu and Hoffmann. In this connection the Secretary of States invited reference to his telegram No. 251 of the 28 of March 1942 in which he suggested that a review should be undertaken of all cases of interned enemy aliens whose profession of anti-Nazi or anti-Fascist view there were no specific grounds for doubting (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1942: 626).

In a letter from Mrs. Marianne Kuschnitzky (nee Weinberg) to the Under-Secretary of the Colonial Offices, London, she drew attention to the case of Mr. Francesco Canfailla of Accra, Gold Coast, who had been interned for one year and a half, and was at present in the Italian Camp in Jamaica.

Mr. Canfailla was born in Sicily, but he and his family left Italy when he was three years old and went to live in Paris. During the last twenty years,

Mr. Canfailla had lived in the Gold Coast, where he worked as a building-contractor, mostly for the Gold Coast-Government. He was well known in Accra, and he even gave a memorial-stone for the British dead of the First World War (1914-1918) to the town of Accra. In December 1938, he married the petitioner's (Mrs. Marianne Kuschnitzky's) sister, Mrs. Thea Schiff, nee Weinberg, a German-Jewish refugee from Nazi oppression. All members of their family were Jews. Mr. Canfailla married his wife after the racial laws had come into force in Italy, and he married under British Law. He gave up his Italian citizenship and applied for British citizenship, but the war started before he got his documents. When Italy entered the war, Mr. Canfailla was interned and later sent to Jamaica (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1942: 627). The petitioner also noted that though her sister's son-in-law, Mr. Ernst Friedrigh of Accra, a Swiss, offered to guarantee for the two women, her sister and her mother, who was living with her, preferred to follow Mr. Canfailla to Jamaica, in order to stay with him, as they had been promised by the Gold Coast Authorities. They were, however, bitterly disappointed when on their arrival they found that they were treated as internees and detained in a women's internment camp, even together with Nazi-women (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1942: 627). The petitioner also noted that her mother, Mrs. Helen Weinberg, nee Hirschland, would be seventy years old next year (1943). She was a granddaughter of the late Simon Hirschland, Essen, a name well known to English bankers. She maintained that she should like to point out that Mr. Canfailla was Anti-Fascist, and that his marrying a Jewish, against the Italian laws, was only in accordance with his democratic views. She felt sure that the Gold Coast-Government would confirm the political reliability of Mr. Canfailla. As to her mother and sister, the petitioner needed not say that they were willing to do all they could for the British Empire, which gave them a home again after the cruel treatment they had gone through in Germany (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1942: 628).

In reply, T.I.K. Lloyd noted that he had been directed by Viscount Granborne to state that a copy of the petitioner's letter was being immediately sent to the Governor of Jamaica for consideration in connection with Mr. Canfailla's case, and also to the Governor of the Gold Coast. With regard to the separation of Nazis and anti-Nazis in the women's internment camp, arrangements for the separation were put in hand in October last and should be now have been completed (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1942: 627).

Similarly, in a letter from the Secretary of States for the Colonies to the Governor of Nigeria, he noted

that he continue to receive a strong representations regarding continued internment in Jamaica of enemy aliens including those deported from West Africa, whose anti-Nazi sympathies there were no specific reasons to doubt, maintaining that he was aware from the Governor's secret dispatch of 28 June 1941 that the cases of Jewish refugees had been reviewed and that the Governor decided that several of them could be released provided they secured either employment or guarantees of maintenance. He also noted that he found considerable difficulty, however, in defending the continued detention of persons who, having been interned for one reason, were kept in detention for quite another one; and that he appreciated, however, practical difficulties of releasing such persons in Jamaica without means of subsistence. The first thing was to ascertain the size of the problem. This might best be done by the appointment of a special tribunal which, taking into account the general policy outlined in the White Paper enclosed in his circular note of 29 November 1940, would examine all the cases of enemy aliens to whose release in Jamaica the only obstacle was that of providing employment or maintenance. As a result of such an enquiry, it might be found that some persons concerned possessed technical or other qualifications fitting them to assist the war effort here or in Jamaica while in others there might be special reason to consider anew the possibility of their return to West Africa.

The Secretary of State also noted that other cases of interned aliens in which representations had reached him included Kahn and Klein, Gertig and Miss Schoene. He requested the Governor to state reasons for doubting bona fides of first two and report whether cases of other two had ever been reviewed. In this connection, the Governor should know that the Secretary of State considered that all cases of professed anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist internees should be reviewed at regular intervals, preferably by an independent tribunal nominated for the purpose. Advisory Committee appointed under Defence Regulations might be suitable, if it was not desired to create additional tribunal (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1942: 630).

Questions of legality of internment under Royal Prerogative of German Jews who had been, or might have been, deprived of their German nationality by the German Ordinance of 25 November 1941, had been recently under consideration. It had been decided by His Majesty's Government that unless and until the High Court decided in any particular case that the effect of the German Ordinance was to relieve an alien, who was formerly of enemy nationality, from his liability to internment under the

Royal Prerogative, such persons would continue to be treated as liable to internment under the Royal Prerogative (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1942: 631).

From Jamaica, the Colonial Secretary wrote to the Governor of Nigeria noting that he was directed to request the Governor to be so good as to provide information regarding an Italian civilian internee named G. Mora (No. 662) who was transferred from Nigeria for internment during the war, and who was recently sent to the United Kingdom for reparation to Italy. Immediately before his departure, Mora represented that on his arrival in Jamaica he had deposited with the authorities of the Internment Camp a large bottle containing 420 ounces of gold dust, and that the bottle later returned to him did not contain the quantity of gold dust which he had deposited. Enquiries had been made into the matter, and it seemed clear that Mora's allegation was entirely without foundation. It was possible, however, that he might make further representations in the matter. Another Italian interned in Jamaica, named Selva, had stated that when Mora was in Nigeria he was involved in "some confidence trick in connection with gold dust". The Colonial Secretary noted that it would be much appreciated if the Governor of Nigeria would make available Mora's record with special reference to his dealing in gold dust (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1942: 644). However, in a correspondence from the Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Nigeria to the Commissioner of Police, it was noted that "neither Giovanni Mora nor Selva appeared in the list of enemy alien internees sent under cover of your Secret letter of 19 August, 1940. It is thought possible, therefore, that these persons may have been interned in Nigeria." (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1946: 646). The Commissioner of Police noted that there was no record in this office that Giovanni Mora, who was transferred with other Italian internees to Jamaica, was ever engaged in the illicit traffic in gold neither have they any information regarding the fact that he handed any gold to the officer-in-charge of the Internment Camp. He was a contractor employed by Chidiac, a Labanese, and was resident in Gusau, Sokoto Province in Northern Provinces of Nigeria. The internment camp records showed that he handed over only £28, his passport and Aliens Registration book (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1946: 647).

5. Question of the Enlistment of Internees in Jamaica in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps

There was the question regarding the policy in the United Kingdom in regard to release of enemy aliens

from internment. Question of release of all men who could established that they were friendly to the Allied cause but who did not belong to categories set out in Cmd. 6233 had been carefully considered and it had been decided that since numbers involved would be very large it would be impracticable for each case to be heard by a tribunal. A certain number of such internees was covered by Categories 19 and 22 and their case would be heard by a tribunal. Most of these internees however would not be covered by those categories and it had, therefore, been decided that for those not included who were between 18 and 50 years of age enlistment in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer corps afforded an opportunity clearly to demonstrate their friendliness to the Allied cause and such men were being encouraged to offer themselves for service in that corps (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1941: 599).

As regards those who were not eligible for enlistment or were rejected on medical grounds a new category had been added to the Home Office White Paper for the release of men who by reason of age or physical unfitness were ineligible for the Pioneer Corps but could satisfy a tribunal that they were opposed to the Nazi or Fascist systems, that they would remain steadfast towards that cause in all circumstance. Arrangements were also being made in co-operation with the Minister of Labour and National Service to ascertain what other persons there might be among the internees who had special qualifications to undertake work for which there was a shortage of skilled workers, and it was contemplated that such persons would be released, provided there was no security objection in individual cases. As regards women, a review of all those who had been placed by a tribunal or Advisory Committee in the "B" Category was being carried out by a special Committee with a view to the possibility of releasing such women (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1941: 599).

The enquiry, whether internees in Jamaica who satisfied that they were opposed to the Nazi or Fascist systems might be given an opportunity of volunteering to enlist in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps or in the case of skilled artisans to undertake work whether suitable volunteers in these categories, should be sent to the United Kingdom. The Colonial Office feared that it would not be possible to arrange for the reception in the United Kingdom of released internees for civilian employment as skilled artisans, but the Army Council were prepared to agree to accept for enlistment in the Pioneer Corps enemy aliens interned in Jamaica or in

other West Indian Colonies subject to the following conditions:

(i) Particulars of each internee whom it was desired to release must be furnished in Form E. N.1. to the War Office who, after investigation, would be determine whether the internee might be accepted for enlistment or not. A copy of Form E.N.1. was enclosed and further copies might be made locally as required.

(ii) Enlistment of approved internees would be conditional on their being found medically and physically up to the required standards and would be carried out in Jamaica, Nermuda and Trinidad, under arrangements to be made by the Officer Commanding the Troops in those Colonies, who would also arrange for their subsequent dispatch to the United Kingdom. In this connection, it was considered that enlistment of approved aliens should be carried out on the day on which they would be required to embark for the United Kingdom, and that they should be released from internment prior to that day.

(iii) The cost of transport from the West Indies to England would be met by the War Office.

(iv) An assurance would be required from the Colonial Governments concerned agreeing to permit the return to the Colonies of any aliens discharged from the Pioneer Corps, in the event of His Majesty's Government in Great Britain being unwilling to grant them permission to reside in the United Kingdom after the conclusion of their service in the Pioneer Corps, and that any expense so involved should be borne by the Colonial Governments.

(v) Aliens' wives, parents or dependents could not be permitted to come to the United Kingdom. It was suggested, therefore, that consideration should preferably be given to unmarried applicants (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1941: 615).

The Colonial Office was of the opinion that the Nigerian Government would, no doubt, consider whether among the internees transferred to Jamaica from the West African Colonies, there were any who might be included in these arrangements. If it would be necessary for any such internees to be discharged from the Pioneer Corps before the end of the war it would presumably be essential for them to be sent back to Jamaica for internment there. If, on the other hand, there were not discharged from the Pioneer Corps until after the end of the war and it was not then considered possible to allow them to reside in the United Kingdom, it would be necessary for them to be sent back to the West African Colony whence they would be transferred to Jamaica (NAI CSO 26/31594/S.25/V, 1941: 616).

6. Conclusion

The outbreak of the Second World War led to the internment of Germans and other enemy aliens in the British Empire. This wartime action against the enemy subjects was also carried out in British West Africa where legislation was also domesticated and implemented. Depending on the condition, there were intra and inter regional movements of the enemy internees in the British Empire.

With regard to the intra-regional movement, there was a request for the transfer of internees from Sierra Leone to Nigeria. For instance, Ulric and Charlotte Rietmann (Swiss-Hotel-Keeper with German wife) were in the internment camp at Freetown. There was no definite evidence against them of hostile association or activities, but they had opportunities as hotel-keepers to acquire and to impart valuable information. This made their internment advisable. The wife was pregnant and due for confinement in late or early December 1940, and the medical adviser had urged most strongly her removal to a more suitable place than Freetown. The Secretary of State, after consulting the Admiralty, suggested Buea in the Cameroons (Southern Nigeria) and Commander-in-Chief and Medical adviser concurred in this suggestion (NAI CSO 36117/I: 102). However, the Commissioner, Nigeria Police Force declined the request, noting that he saw no reason why undesirable aliens should be off-loaded on Nigeria just because the lady was pregnant, maintain that the Nigerian Government was considering ways and means by which undesirable aliens might be removed from Nigeria (NAI CSO 36117/I: 105).

Regarding inter-regional transfer, most of the internees in West Africa were transferred to Jamaica in West Indies in November 1940 due to the difficulty in the provision of suitable accommodation in West Africa for Europeans most especially in Sierra Leone. Those who were not transferred were either repatriated or released on parole.

While in Jamaica, representations were made by relatives in connection with the internees concerning their well-being. There was the consideration in the United Kingdom that internees in Jamaica who satisfied that they were opposed to the Nazi or Fascist systems might be given an opportunity of volunteering to enlist in the British Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps or, in the case of skilled artisans, to undertake work in the United Kingdom.

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