Part III
Strategies of coping and resistance

Undesirable asylum-seekers from National Socialist Germany in France

Horst Rosenthals' comics in Gurs Camp

Pnina Rosenberg

German immigrants in interwar France

Horst Rosenthal (b. 1915, Breslau; d. 1942, Auschwitz) was among the German-Jewish asylum-seekers who fled to France following the rise of National Socialism in Germany. By 1939, France was hosting an estimated 30,000–35,000 legal or clandestine refugees of German and Austrian origin.[1] Despite help from relief organisations, their situation was extremely arduous,[2] as insufficient economic resources were compounded by increasing hostility and mistrust from the French.[3] Even so, most of the refugees saw the "cradle of human rights" as a safe haven. With the beginning of the Second World War, their expectations were shattered.

On 4 September 1939, a day after its declaration of war, the Third Republic, alarmed by the prospect of a "fifth column," proclaimed that all male refugees aged seventeen to fifty (later extended to sixty-five) of the "Third Reich" were to be placed under strict police surveillance. Thus, thousands of stateless exiles were ironically and tragically defined as "*indésirables*" and "enemy aliens" and interned in various southern French camps, such as Les Milles, Gurs, Rieucros and Le Vernet.[4]

1 Rita Thalmann, "Jewish Women Exiled in France after 1933," in Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period, edited by Sibylle Quack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 52–3; Vicki Caron, "Unwilling Refuge: France and the Dilemma of Illegal Immigration, 1933–1939," in Refugees from Nazi Germany and the Liberal European States, edited by Frank Caestecker and Bob Moore (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 57–80; Greg Burgess, The League of Nations and the Refugees from Nazi Germany: James G. McDonald and Hitler's Victims (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 18–19.

2 Greg Burgess, Refuge in the Land of Liberty: France and its Refugees, from the Revolution to the End of Asylum 1787–1939 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 165–85.

3 Hanna Schramm and Barbara Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs: Un Camp de conçentration français 1940–1941, translated by Irène Petit (Paris: Maspero, 1979), 197.

4 Michael Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, Vichy France and the Jews (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 3–4. Caron, "Unwilling Refuge," 76.

Following its defeat in 1940, France was divided into the Occupied Zone and the Non-occupied – or Free – Zone. The latter was headed by Marshal Philippe Pétain and established its seat of government in the town of Vichy. The Vichy regime saw the defeat not as the result of a series of political and military blunders, but as the consequence of a degenerate, sick society that had lost its French character. "Anti-French" groups such as communists, Jews, freemasons and foreigners were identified as the main culprits and became the targets of vicious propaganda. It was seen as essential to rid France of these supposedly negative forces and emphasise the traditional French qualities of *travail, famille, patrie* (work, family, homeland) – the three principles of Pétain's "National Revolution."[5] The camps were therefore an important component of this new regime, as they could be used to segregate antisocial elements who could not be re-educated and were considered the root of all evil from mainstream, wholesome French society.

The xenophobic and anti-Semitic Vichy regime not only collaborated with the German occupiers but exceeded National Socialist directives. The peak came on 16 July 1942, when the French police arrested nearly 13,000 Jewish men, women and children at their homes or on the streets of Paris. The victims were taken to the Winter Stadium (Vélodrome d'hiver or Vel d'Hiv) and later deported to the death camps. As Prime Minister Pierre Laval explained with chilling cynicism, "out of humane consideration, the Head of State determined, contrary to German demands, that children under the age of 16 should be accompanied by their parents."[6] There were only few survivors among the 3,900 children who were taken to the Vel d'Hiv that day.

Gurs Camp

Gurs Camp, near the Pyrenees, was the largest Free Zone internment camp. From March 1939 to November 1943, a rich and diverse population of some 21,790 men, women and children were imprisoned there, most of them of German origin.[7] The first inmates were refugees from the Spanish Civil War or International Brigade fighters who had fled over France's southern border.[8] However, in October 1940, the German regime rounded up some 7,000 Jews in the provinces of Baden and the

5 Henri Michel, "La Révolution Nationale latitude d'action du gouvernement de Vichy," Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale 21 (1971) 81: 3–22.

6 Réunion du Conseil des Ministres, 10 July 1942, cited in Serge Klarsfeld, Vichy Auschwitz: Le Rôle de Vichy dans la solution finale de la question juive en France 1942 (Paris: Fayard. 1983), 244.

7 Claude Laharie, Le Camp de Gurs 1939–1945: Un Aspect méconnu de l'histoire de Vichy (Pau: Infocompo, 1993), 219.

8 Ibid., 103–35.

Palatinate and sent them to Gurs.[9] In addition, some 7,000 male refugees from Germany, Austria and Poland had been sent to the French camp of Saint-Cyprien on the Mediterranean coast following the German invasion of Belgium in May 1940, but the camp flooded that October and more than 3,000 of the inmates were transferred to Gurs.[10] Consequently, many of the Gurs internees were persecuted German or Austrian Jews, anti-National Socialist militants or left-wing intellectuals whom the French regime absurdly regarded as a "threat to national security."[11]

Daily life demanded constant improvisation, as the camp lacked even the most basic necessities. A lack of food and water led to widespread sickness and outbreaks of disease. The camp had been built on non-porous soil, so rain turned the whole site into a mudbath, making movement between the barracks extremely difficult.[12] The inmates' deterioration was ironically but accurately summarised in Heini Walfisch's poem "Le Monsieur élégant dans la boue" ("The Elegant Gentleman in the Mud"), written during his internment in Gurs:

> Once I used to be an elegant monsieur
> I had a sharp crease in my trousers, a tie and a white collar
> I knew by heart the tunes of Figaro and of Tristan
> And I had a vision of the world that was almost mine
> (Meanwhile it all crumbled)
> […]
> In the meantime many things have happened
> The elegant monsieur has slipped in the mud
> And the worldview, Tristan, the tie and the collar
> (I say without exaggeration)
> Are a little wrinkled, as is the crease of my trousers.[13]

9 Ibid., 171–3; Erhard Roy Wiehn (ed.), Oktoberdeportation 1940 (Konstanz: Harting-Gorre, 1990).

10 Sybil H. Milton, "Culture under Duress: Art and the Holocaust," in The Holocaust's Ghost: Writing on Art, Politics, Law and Education, edited by Bernard Schwartz and F. C. DeCoste (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000), 92; Laharie, Le Camp de Gurs, 173–4.

11 Denis Peschanski, "1939–1946, les camps français d'internement," Hommes et Migration 1175 (1994): 12.

12 Laharie, Le Camp de Gurs, 326–34.

13 Heini Walfisch, "Le Monsieur élégant dans la boue," in Schramm and Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs, 146.

L'École de Gurs[14]

"We did not realise just how extensive was the art produced in the camp [at Gurs,] which was so isolated from the rest of the world, until the spring of 1941, when an art exhibition was held of paintings, drawings, sculpture and graphics in the 'cultural centre,'"[15] wrote Hanna Schramm in her memoir *Vivre à Gurs*.[16] From March 1941, one barracks in each block became a "cultural centre" (*foyer culturel/maison de la culture*) where lectures were held and inmates' visual arts exhibited. Schramm was especially impressed by Julius Collen Turner's[17] portraits, which were "faithful representations of their models, as he refused to improve on the reality of his subjects." Despite this refusal to embellish or flatter the models, as was customary in the camps' commissioned portraits, which often became goods for barter,[18] demand for Turner's work was so great that he could scarcely keep up with it.[19] One of his portraits features Elsbeth Kasser (Figure 1), a Swiss nurse who worked in Gurs on behalf of the Red Cross's *Secours Suisse* and formed close friendships with many of the camp's artists, including Turner and Horst Rosenthal. In addition to purchasing some of the artists' drawings and paintings herself, Kasser encouraged her Swiss colleagues to do the same, which helped the inmates to supplement their paltry food rations. These works and others donated to her by the artists as tokens of their appreciation (including Rosen-

14 Borrowed from Mary Felstiner, To Paint her Life: Charlotte Salomon in the Nazi Era (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 122.

15 Schramm and Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs, 143.

16 Hanna Schramm (b. 1891, Berlin; d. 1978, Paris), an active socialist (SPD) in Germany, moved to Paris where she worked as an educator. She was incarcerated in Gurs in June 1940. She was rescued through the intervention of Abbé Alexander Glasberg in summer 1941, then lived in an absorption centre near Lyon. She remained in France after the Liberation, and is best known for her memoir, Vivre à Gurs. See Ruth Schwertfeger, In Transit: Narratives of German Jews in Exile, Flight, and Internment during "The Dark Years" of France (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2012), 80–82. On Abbé Glasberg, see Lucien Lazar, L'Abbé Glasberg (Paris: Cerf, 1990); Nina Gourfinkel, L'Autre Patrie (Paris: Seuil, 1953), 231–308.

17 Julius Collen Turner (b. 1881, Schievelbein; d. 1948, Ostend) was a German artist who married a Belgian woman and moved to Ostend in 1936. Following the German occupation of Belgium in May 1940, he was sent to Saint-Cyprien Camp, then transferred to Gurs in October 1940, where he was active in cultural activities. He was released through the efforts of Abbé Glasberg in March 1943 and returned to Belgium three years later. See Norbert Hostyn, Julius Collen Turner 1881–1948: Kunstschilder, Graficus, Portrettist (Ostend: Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Bernd Collen, 1994).

18 Pnina Rosenberg, L'Art des indésirables: L'Art dans les camps d'internement français 1939–1944 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 83–106.

19 Schramm and Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs, 143.

thal's *Petit Guide à travers le camp de Gurs*), now part of the Elsbeth Kasser Collection, Archive for Contemporary History, Zurich (*Archiv für Zeitgeschichte der ETH Zürich*).[20]

Figure 1: Julius Collen Turner, Portrait of Elsbeth Kasser, 1942, sanguine on paper

Source: Archives of Contemporary History, ETH Zurich / Elsbeth Kasser-Stiftung: BA Elsbeth Kasser / 97.

20 Elsbeth Kasser (b. 1910, Niederscherli; d. 1992, Steffisburg) served as a nurse in Gurs Camp from 1940 to 1943. See Therese Schmid-Ackeret, "Elsbeth Kasser (1910–1992): Engagement für Verfolgte und Leidende," in Vergessene Frauen: Humanitäre Kinderhilfe und offizielle Flüchtlingspolitik 1917–1948, edited by Helena Kanyar Becker (Basel: Schwabe, 2010), 130–51; Elsbeth Kasser, "Kunstnere i Gurs-lejren," in Gurs: En interneringslejr Sydfranking, 1939–1942, Tegninger, Akvareller, Fotografier, Samling Elsbeth Kasser (Viborg: Skovgaard Museets Forlag, 1989), 10–11.

Alongside the artists, talented actors, musicians and dancers staged plays from the classical canon as well as cabarets that were highly popular with both their fellow inmates and the camp's French staff (see Figure 5, below).[21] Heini Walfisch's "Théâtre à Gurs" provides an insight into the breadth of the performers' repertoires as well as the meagre rewards they received for their efforts:

> We act for our miserable living,
> Nobody knows what that means
> For Ibsen, a chunk of bread,
> For Shakespeare, an egg
> And maybe a pinch of semolina.[22]

This rich and diverse cultural activity ceased in the summer of 1942 with the onset of deportations to the death camps, where many of Gurs's gifted artists were ruthlessly annihilated.

Gurs through the prism of comics

Horst Rosenthal emigrated to France in 1933 at the age of eighteen and settled in Paris. According to forms he filled in while interned in Gurs, he had worked as an artistic designer, although no other documentation was found to confirm this. With France's declaration of war in early September 1939, Rosenthal, as a "German citizen," was sent to the Parisian Colombes Stadium and from there transferred to various camps, including Gurs. Two months later, he was freed and returned to Paris. However, on 20 May 1940, as the German Wehrmacht attacked France, he was summoned to the Parisian reassembly centre at the Buffalo Stadium and subsequently interned as a "political refugee of German origin" in several camps before ending up in Gurs on 28 October 1940. In July 1942, Rosenthal was transferred to Barcarès, Rivesaltes[23] and finally Drancy prior to his deportation, in Convoy No. 31, to Auschwitz-Birkenau on 11 September 1942.[24]

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21 On cabarets in Gurs, see Pnina Rosenberg, "Resistance on Stage: Theatrical Performances in French Internment Camps," in Theater unter NS-Herrschaft/Theatre under Pressure, edited by Brigitte Dalinger and Veronika Zang (Vienna: V&R unipress, Vienna University Press, 2018), 291–5.

22 Heini Walfisch, "Théâtre à Gurs," in Schramm and Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs, 139.

23 See Mayer, this volume.

24 See Pnina Rosenberg, "Mickey orphelin: La Courte vie de Horst Rosenthal / Das Waisenkind Mickey Maus, oder: das kurze Leben des Horst Rosenthal," in L'Irréparable itinéraires d'artistes et d'amateurs d'art juifs réfugiés du "Troisième Reich" en France, edited by Anne Grynberg and Johanna Linsler (Magdeburg: Herausgegeben von der Koordinierungsstelle für Kulturgutverluste, 2013), 349–83.

Towards the end of his time in Gurs, Rosenthal produced three small (8 × 14 centimetres each) satirical comic-book critiques of the Vichy regime: *Mickey Mouse in Gurs Camp*; *A Day in the Life of a Resident: Gurs Camp 1942*; and *A Little Guide through Gurs Camp 1942*.[25] These graphic novels depict life in Gurs through the eyes of three different protagonists and from diverse perspectives. In *Mickey Mouse in Gurs*, the narrator is Walt Disney's fictional mouse, who, while strolling somewhere in France, encounters a gendarme. Mickey is unable to present his documents, so the gendarme interns him in Gurs. In contrast to *Mickey*'s first-person narration, *A Day in the Life of a Resident* and *A Little Guide through Gurs Camp* are mostly narrated by all-knowing third persons. However, despite their supposed familiarity with the camp's daily routine, these are unreliable narrators, as is evident in gaps between the images and the text, which serves to heighten the critical irony. The scarcity of information about the artist poses a number of unanswered questions, including the order of the booklets' production. I suspect that *Mickey*, which tells the story of the protagonist's incarceration, came first, followed by *A Day in the Life*, while the hint of an unhappy ending on the final page of *A Little Guide* (see below) suggests that it was the final part of the trilogy.

A Little Guide through Gurs Camp 1942

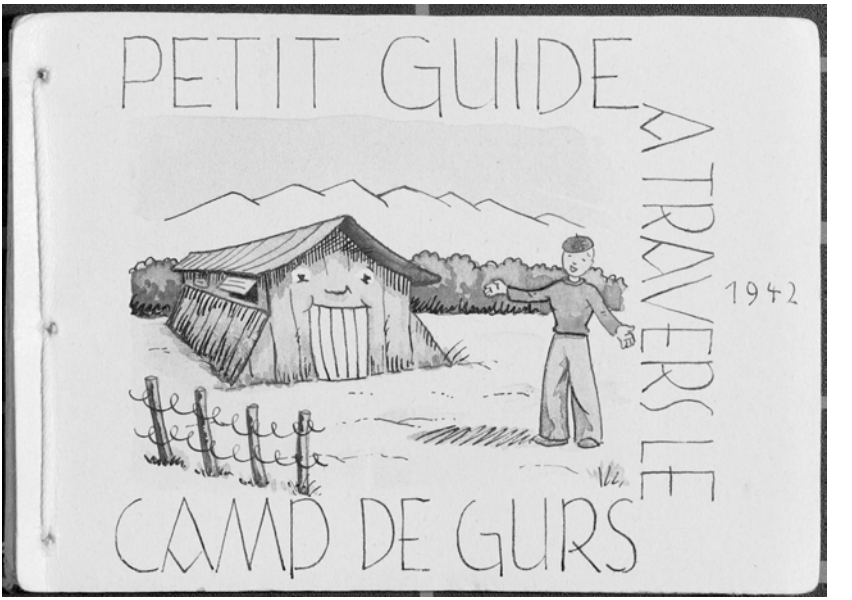
Visit Gurs

A Little Guide follows the familiar pattern of a guidebook by presenting the marvels of the camp and highlighting its uniqueness. The title page depicts an idyllic scene in which a figure with outstretched arms both welcomes visitors and seems to praise the beauty of this touristic gem (Figure 2). In the middle ground is a typical Gurs barracks, albeit with its windows transformed into two happy eyes and its door a large, smiling mouth, against a backdrop of the snowy Pyrenees.[26] Although there is also a depiction of the camp's fence, it seems unthreatening and far too flimsy to enclose thousands of "undesirables." However, the graphic design of title text, which almost surrounds the image, subtly implies the true nature of Gurs as a place of imprisonment. Thus, the tension between the text and the image is key to deciphering the multi-layered meaning of *A Little Guide*.

25 Mickey au camp de Gurs (Mickey Mouse in Gurs Camp) and La Journée d'un hébérge: Camp de Gurs 1942 (A Day in the Life of a Resident: Gurs Camp 1942) are in the archives of the Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris (DL xvi-92 and DL xvi-91, respectively); Petit Guide à travers le camp de Gurs 1942 (A Little Guide through Gurs Camp 1942) is in the Archives of Contemporary History, ETH Zurich and Elsbeth Kasser-Stiftung / BA Elsbeth Kasser (122).

26 On the Gurs's "Adrian-type" barracks, see Laharie, Le Camp de Gurs, 35–7.

Figure 2: Horst Rosenthal, A Little Guide through Gurs Camp 1942, title page, ink and watercolour on paper



Source: Archives of Contemporary History, ETH Zurich and Elsbeth Kasser-Stiftung / BA Elsbeth Kasser (122).

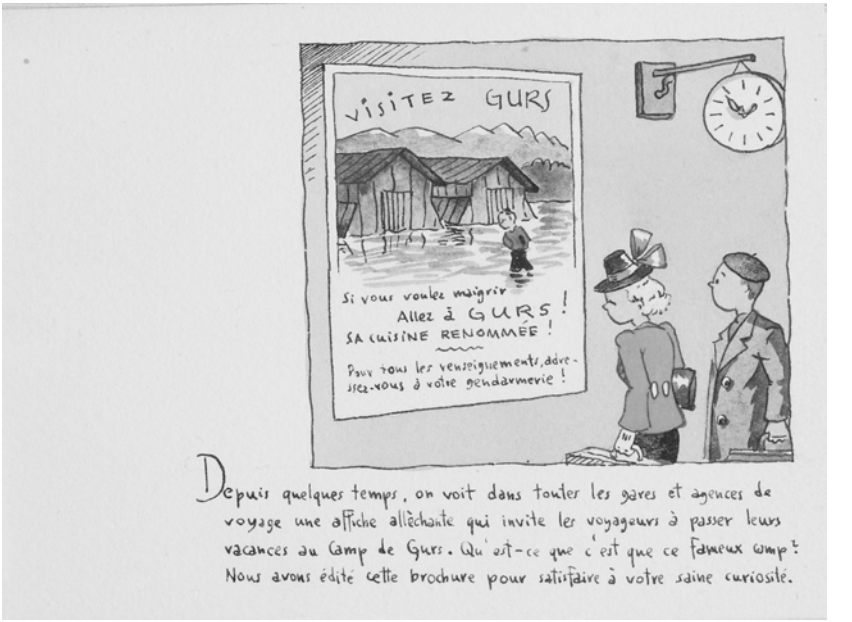
On the next page, the invisible narrator uses first person plural when explaining the reason for the guide's publication:

> For some time, posters praising Gurs Camp and inviting travellers to vacation there have been seen at all the railway stations and travel agencies. What is it about this famous camp? In order to satisfy your curiosity, we have prepared this brochure.

This explanatory text appears below a drawing of a couple standing under a railway station clock and reading a poster with the headline "VISIT GURS" (Figure 3). The poster, which depicts two barracks in knee-high water through which a man is wading, again against the backdrop of the Pyrenees, includes the following text:

> If you would like to lose weight
> Go to Gurs!
> Its cuisine is renowned!
> For all information, please visit your police station!

Figure 3: Horst Rosenthal, A Little Guide through Gurs Camp 1942, p. 2, ink and watercolour on paper



Source: Archives of Contemporary History, ETH Zurich and Elsbeth Kasser-Stiftung / BA Elsbeth Kasser (122).

The final line alludes to posters that appeared throughout France in May 1940. German and Austrian émigrés – by then regarded as enemy aliens – were summoned to designated places prior to transportation to various camps, including Gurs. Failure to appear led to imprisonment.[27] Thus, a xenophobic and intimidating government command and subsequent internment on meagre rations in a prison camp are here transformed into a polite invitation to lose some weight at a health spa.[28]

27 The posters summoned all Germans and foreigners of undetermined nationalities of German origin aged seventeen to sixty-five to present themselves at designated assembly centres. See Schramm and Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs, 271–3; and Republique Français, Ordre concernant les ressortissants allemands et étrangers de nationalité indéterminée mais d'origin allemande in ibid., facing 64; Rosenberg, "Mickey orphelin," 355, 374–5.

28 The daily allowance in 1942 consisted (theoretically) of 350–400 grams of bread, 100 grams of dried vegetables or rice and 11 grams of margarine, plus 125 grams of meat (or meat substitute) per week and cheese once a month. The actual portions were usually smaller. See Laharie, Le Camp de Gurs, 301–14.

As on the title page, and throughout the rest of the booklet, page two's text and image contradict and challenge each other: while the former describes "inviting" posters, the latter shows two unwelcoming barracks and an inmate trudging forlornly along a flooded path – a familiar practice for internees whenever it rained and the camp became a sea of mud. Close reading of the image/text reveals that the couple with suitcases are not vacationing tourists. Rather, they are émigrés who are adhering to the summons of 23 May 1940 in which "all foreigners mentioned above may, at their expense, take the railway, or any other means of public transport, to reach the assigned assembling centre […] Their baggage should not be over thirty kilos."[29] By juxtaposing the smart couple with the downtrodden internee, Rosenthal visualises the degradation the travellers are about to suffer – from normal citizens to shabby prisoners deprived of all dignity and freedom of movement, as symbolised by the wading inmate's struggle to move.

Homo pyrénensis

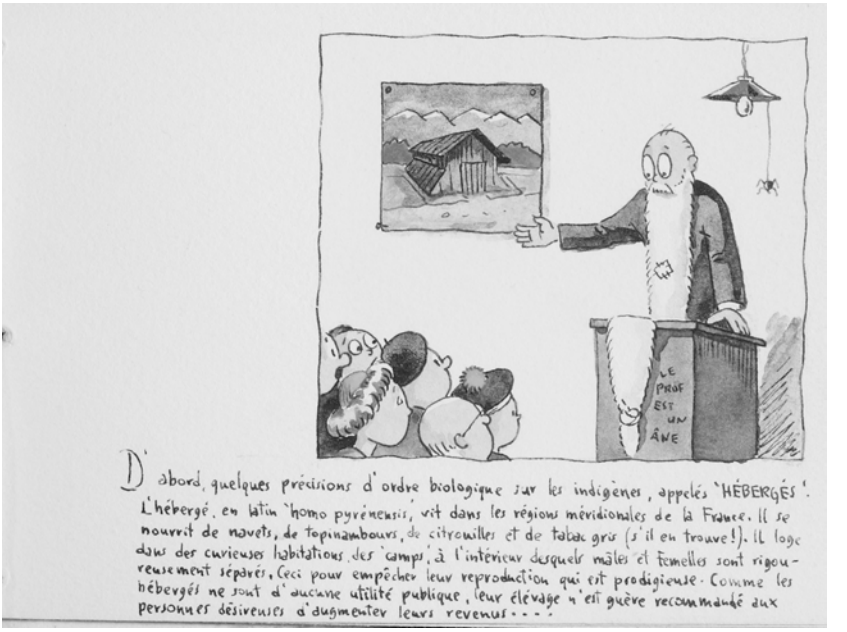
On the next page, the narrator gives the floor to a distinguished academic, who explains to his students – the camp's exotic residents – that "*L'hébergé*, in Latin, is '*homo pyrénensis*'" (Figure 4). Aided by an image of a typical Gurs barracks set against the backdrop of the Pyrenees, the professor outlines the residents' whereabouts ("they live in the southern regions of France […] in strange habitats, the 'camps'"), diet ("turnips, artichokes, pumpkins and grey tobacco") and living conditions ("males and females are strictly separated," which prevents them from breeding). Through the lecture, Rosenthal presents a largely accurate description of various aspects of life in the camp (several of which are elaborated later in the booklet). However, the pseudo-anthropological terminology endows the text with a sarcastic and satirical dimension.

The lecture begins with a definition of camp's residents – *hébergés* – meaning those who are hosted, guests. This is an allusion to the French Ministry of the Interior's preferred term for the country's detention facilities: *camps d'hébergément* (lit., "accommodation camps").[30]

29 Schramm and Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs, 271–2.

30 Anne Grynberg, Les Camps de la honte: Les Internes juifs des camps français 1939–1944 (Paris: La Découverte, 1991), 94. This euphemistic and "laundered" term is deconstructed in Rosenthal's A Day in the Life of a Resident, which portrays a Gurs inmate as a hotel guest. See Pnina Rosenberg, "Mickey Mouse in Gurs: Humour, Irony and Criticism in Works of Art Produced in the Gurs Internment Camp," Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice 6 (2002) 3: 283–6.

Figure 4: Horst Rosenthal, A Little Guide through Gurs Camp 1942, p. 3, ink and watercolour on paper



Source: Archives of Contemporary History, ETH Zurich and Elsbeth Kasser-Stiftung / BA Elsbeth Kasser (122).

The "anthropological" introduction, tempered with pseudo-scientific Latin to emphasise its supposedly irrefutable validity, evokes an incident in the camp at Le Vernet, which was notorious for its deplorable conditions and brutal punishments.[31] The Hungarian-British author and journalist Arthur Koestler recalled the camp's celebration of New Year's Eve 1941:

> The "politicals" put on an excellent satirical review about the conditions in the camp, culminating in the scene in which a man, after escaping from the camp, preaches to a South Sea tribe about the blessings of real primitive life in Le Vernet. *We have no fire to warm us and no light to see at night and that is real happiness,*

31 Christian Eggers, "Internement sous toutes ses formes: approche d'une vue d'ensemble du système d'internement dans la zone de Vichy," Le Monde Juif 153 (1995): 15–16.

> he explains to them until they get angry, kill him, stuff him and put him in their museum with the label: ***Homo Verniensis*** *(Europe 1940)*.[32]

The inmates are clearly no longer members of normative human society; instead, they belong to a species whose unique characteristics and behaviour will be studied by anthropologists. Such thinking was evident in the anti-Semitic propaganda of Occupied France and the Vichy regime. The notorious *The Jew and France* (*Le Juif et la France*) exhibition, financed by the Germans and held at the Parisian Berlitz Palace between September 1941 and January 1942, and later in other cities, displayed this attitude, which was echoed in the exhibition catalogue written by Jean Marquès-Rivière, one of the organisers.[33] Marquès-Rivière – a French journalist, author and playwright who headed the police service during the war – stated flatly that Jews were not French, since "the Jews are of a different race […] and should never mix with the others."[34]

In *A Little Guide*, the professor speaks from behind a lectern that bears the inscription "*Le prof est un âne*" ("The prof is an ass"). This is probably a reference to a common punishment for disobedient French schoolchildren, who were made to don a *bonnet d'âne* (a dunce's cap with two ears like those of a donkey) and stand in the corner.[35] Thus, the inscription not only ridicules the professor and the pseudo-scientific racial theory promulgated by the Vichy and National Socialist regimes but also hints at a reversal of roles: "The teacher is an ass" was no doubt written by his "ignorant" pupils, his captive audience. Moreover, the professor's long white beard, which cascades over the edge of the lectern, resembles an inverted dunce's cap. If the professor traditionally has the power to humiliate and punish, in a kind of poetic justice he himself is now on the receiving end.

The swan song

After illustrating various aspects of camp life, such as the poor sanitation, the black market, censorship and the physical and spiritual confinement and isolation, the booklet concludes with a depiction of a cabaret show (Figure 5). As most of

32 Arthur Koestler, Scum of the Earth, translated by Daphne Hardy (London: Victor Gollancz, 1941), 187; bold emphasis added.

33 André Kaspi, "Le Juif et la France: Une Exposition à Paris en 1941," Le Monde Juif 79 (1975): 8–20; André Kaspi, Les Juifs pendant l'Occupation (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 104–10.

34 Jean Marquès-Rivière, Exposition: Le Juif et la France au Palais Berlitz (Paris: Institut d'études des questions juives, 1941), 8.

35 "Bonnet d'âne, oreilles d'âne," in Larousse French Dictionary <https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/%c3%a2ne/3392/locution?q=bonnet+d%27%C3%A2ne#16000635> (23 May 2021).

the artist–inmates were of German origin, it is not surprising that the final page alludes to Berlin's interwar cabarets and subtly predicts the tragic fate of many of the performers:

> But do you think we were bored? Far from it! We have a permanent theatrical group, whose director is called Nathan. For a year and a half he has presented the same programme, changing only the titles. He enables the French people in the camp to see the true Parisian spirit. As we say in German, "***Schall und Rauch***" [bold emphasis added].

The "Nathan" in question is Alfred Nathan, also known as Peter Pan,[36] who staged the camp's cabaret shows, as Hanna Schramm recalled: "We owe the first soirée to Fred Nathan, who produced a cabaret […] There was real scenery with a curtain, a small orchestra pit and some rudimentary lighting […] Nathan wrote most of the scripts."[37]

While the image shows the performer on stage in front of an appreciative audience, the accompanying text praises, albeit somewhat ironically, Nathan's rather repetitive programme before adding that the shows enable the French administrators and others in the camp "to see the true Parisian spirit." Although this might be a reference to one particular cabaret – *Folies (He) Bergère*[38] – there is no doubt that Rosenthal also wanted to highlight the troupe's cultural and artistic roots: "As we say in German, '*Schall und Rauch* [sound and smoke].'" This, the final sentence in *A Little Guide*, is a reference to a famous Berlin cabaret founded in 1901 by the actor and director Max Reinhardt, and probably also to Margot Ruth Rauch (b. 1922, Berlin; d. 1942, Auschwitz), a young musician and dancer from Berlin who featured in a number of Gurs Camp productions.[39] This gifted performer, who had delighted her fellow inmates throughout her time in the camp, was loaded onto the first convoy out of Gurs on 6 August 1942,[40] transferred to Drancy, then, four days later, deported to

36 Alfred Nathan (b. 1909, Berlin; d. 1976, East Berlin), stage name Peter Pan, was a Jewish cabaret performer associated with the political left who fled to Paris in 1933. He escaped across the Spanish border on 31 December 1942. See Klaus Budzinski and Reinhard Hippen, Metzler-Kabarett-Lexikon (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2000), 294; André Fontaine, Le Camp d'étrangers des Milles, 1939–1943 (Aix-en-Provence: Ebisud, 1989), 95–6, 109.

37 Schramm and Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs, 136.

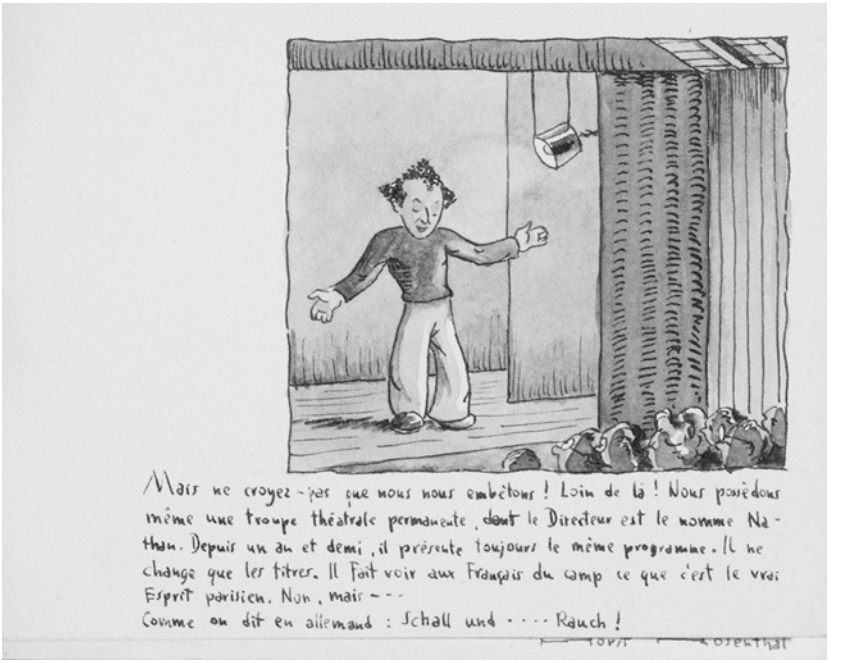
38 The title, Folies (He) Bergère, is an ironic pun: hébergés = inmates and Folies Bergère is a famous Parisian cabaret music-hall. See Folies (He) Bergère, edited and mise-en-scène by Alfred Nathan, music by Kurt Leval, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota.

39 Rauch played the main role – a Disney-esque cartoon character – in Shmok's Scornful Newsreel (Schmocks hoehnende Wochenschau), and in Folies (He) Bergère. See Shmok's Scornful Newsreel, edited and mise-en-scène by Alfred Nathan, music by Kurt Leval, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota.

40 Laharie, Le Camp de Gurs, 217.

Auschwitz on Transport no. 17, never to return.[41] Rosenthal's pun on her name may be read as an ominous prediction of the young dancer's tragic fate.

Figure 5: Horst Rosenthal, A Little Guide through Gurs Camp 1942, p. 12, ink and watercolour on paper



Source: Archives of Contemporary History, ETH Zurich and Elsbeth Kasser-Stiftung/BA Elsbeth Kasser (122).

The final curtain fell in Gurs as the deportations began, as one of the remaining inmates recalled: "The convoy of 6 August included almost all our artistic individuals, all those young people who tried to maintain, with great effort, the cultural activities in the camp […] the dancers Ruth Rauch and Steffi Smith."[42]

Many of these deportees, including Rosenthal, were sent to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Thus, their rich artistic activities in Gurs were their "swan song."

41 Serge Klarsfeld, Memorial to the Jews Deported from France 1942–1944: Documentation of the Deportation of the Victims of the Final Solution in France (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1983), 140, 145.

42 Heini Walfisch, quoted in Schramm and Vormeier, Vivre à Gurs, 160.

Conclusion: removal of the mask

There are two narrators in the twelve pages of A Little Guide. Throughout most of the booklet, the omnipresent guide (or his spokesman – the professor) presents facts and figures "to satisfy" his readers' "curiosity" about the hébergés, whom he describes as "them." Yet, a different narrator – an insider – suddenly and unexpectedly steps forward on the final page. He refers to some of his fellow-inmates by name, acts as a spokesman for the rest of the hébergés and not only uses first (as opposed to third) person plural but specifies all of the residents' – including his own – collective national and cultural origins: "**As we say in German**" (bold emphasis added). In this way, the artist finally unveils the main narrator's true identity: the omnipresent and supposedly objective narrator is actually an inmate, one of the German-Jewish émigrés who are now the camp's hébergés. Although derided as a sub-human homo pyrénensis, it is one of this group who enables the camp's French residents to see "true Parisian spirit." Rosenthal employed a similar artistic device in the final panel of Mickey Mouse in Gurs, in which the protagonist and narrator, Mickey, escapes. Below Mickey's signature, added as a postscript, the artist not only signed his own name but also specified the location and the date – "Gurs Camp 1942." As a result, in addition to revealing himself as the "father" of Mickey, Rosenthal subtly hinted that, in contrast to his fictional creation, he had no means of escape.[43] Thus, we see that one of Rosenthal's artistic strategies was to hide his own persona behind a mask – Mickey Mouse or the impartial narrator – prior to revealing his true self at a crucial moment.

Graphic novels juxtapose images and text to tell a story, with each medium supporting and reinforcing the other, either directly or in a confrontational contrast, by means of irony, satire and other devices. Sometimes the text explains the picture, sometimes it contradicts it, and sometimes the image and the text speak in two voices at once.[44] As we have seen, the panels with a third-person narrator highlight the discrepancies between the "official" semi-bureaucratic textual information and the visual reality. However, this dichotomy is blurred in the final panel (Figure 5). The text describes the image quite accurately, yet only those who share the artist's background and experiences will fully grasp the connotations and allusions that expand and enrich the visualisation.

This poignant final panel, despite its frivolous character, underlines not only the Gurs inmates' heroic attempts to maintain a semblance of normality by recreating

43 Pnina Rosenberg, "From Mice to Mickey to Maus: The Metaphor of Evil and its Metamorphosis in the Holocaust," in Critical Insights: Good and Evil, edited by Margaret Sönser Breen (Ipswich, MA: Salem Press, 2013), 201–2.

44 Hugo Frey and Benjamin Noys, "History in the Graphic Novel," Rethinking History 6 (2002) 3: 255.

their pre-war activities but also encapsulates the crucial role that cultural activities such as performing and painting can play by reinforcing spiritual resistance in "The Concentrationary Universe" (*l'univers Concentrationnaire*).[45]

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45 Borrowed from David Rousset, L'univers Concentrationnaire. (Paris: Éditions du Pavois, 1946).