

POETRY CORNER

CENSUS

Even to rubble-ridden Germany
comes the census form
Symbol of a free country, everything open,
nothing to hide.
We of the occupation fill out the form,
record of our great land's endless growth.

If census takers came now to German doors
Voices of the dead would answer them.
Gemeinden, once accounted for, Jew-filled,
Exist no more.
The bones of Dachau,
The ashes, scattered to the Deutsche winds,
The lonely slabs bearing COHEN, LEVY
and SOLOMON —
These form the sad statistics
for the census-taker's book.

Or ask the DP, today's Wandering Jew,
Inmate of Block A or B of any DP camp.
He will tell you where they are and how
They met their wretched fate.

— Matilda G. Conan

Austrian-born Matilda G. Conan, who immigrated to America in 1911, wrote this poem in Germany in 1950 when she was teaching English to "Displaced Persons" (DPs) in a resettlement camp.

Conan is the mother of *Voice* contributor Julie Freestone.

The poem is printed to mark the Day of Remembrance, Sunday, April 22. See Calendar, pages 4-5, for additional Yam Hashoah events. *Gemeinden* means "communities."

Poetry Editor Eliot Paran has been out of town and will return next month.