

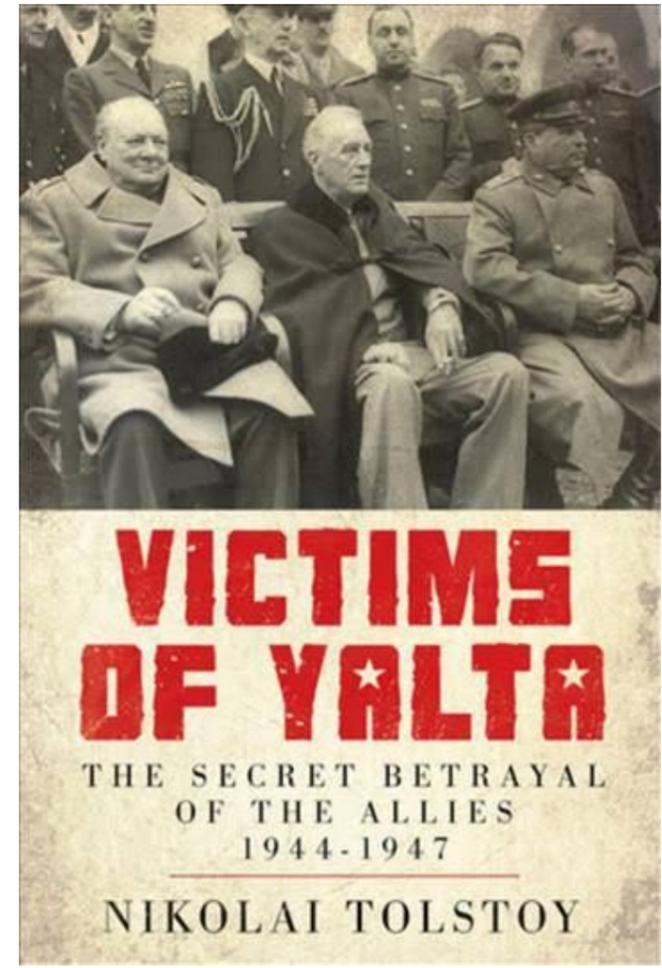
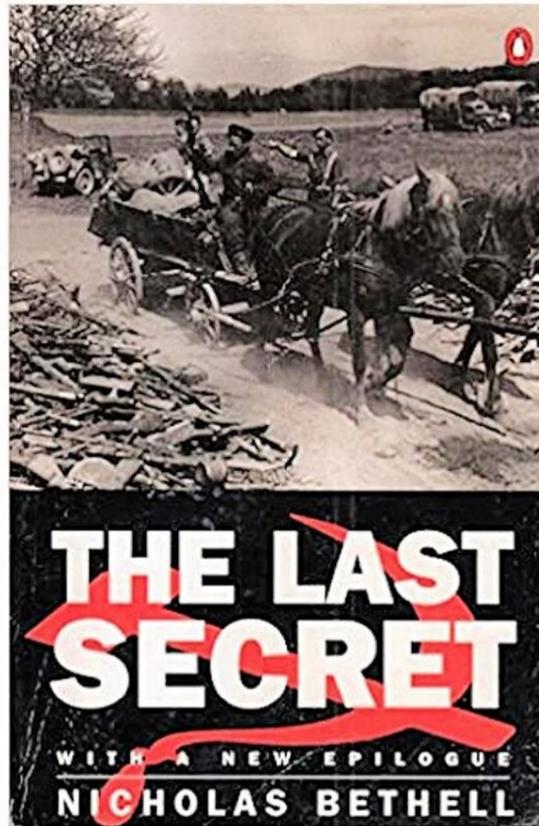
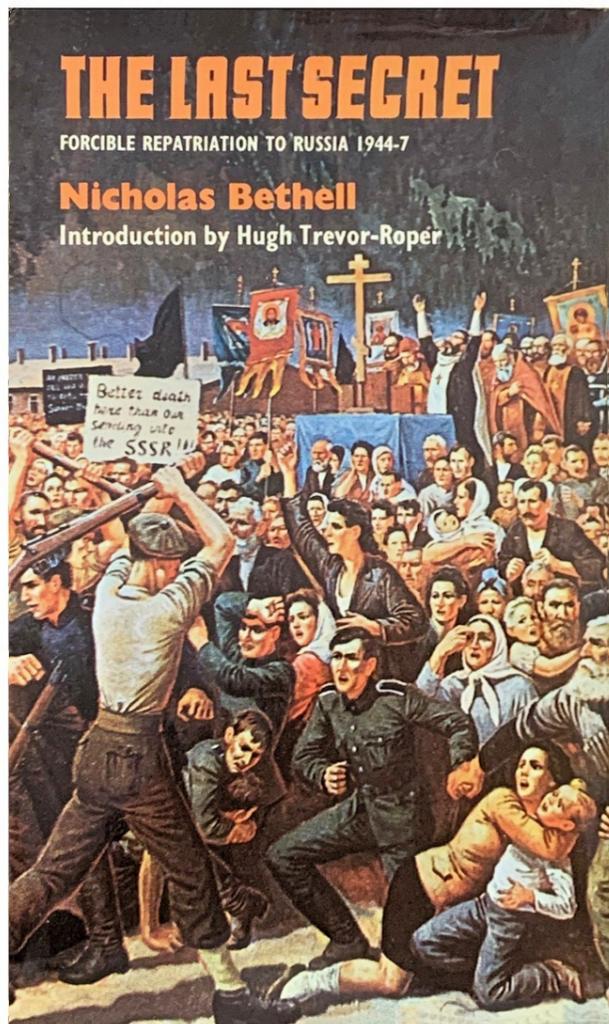
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After World War II prisoners of war suspected of being Soviet citizens were detained in Nissen huts at Newlands Corner Camp in preparation for their forcible repatriation.

Some details of the story appear in *Cossack Web*, extract below, followed by those pages which mention Newlands Corner from *The Last Secret* by Nicholas Bethell, published in 1974.

Letitia Fairfield, doctor, lawyer and sister of Rebecca West, visited the camp frequently during spring 1945, staying with St Loe and Amy Strachey at Harrowhill Copse (designed by architect Clough Williams-Ellis).

Extracts mentioning Newlands Corner appearing in *Victims of Yalta - The Secret Betrayal of the Allies 1944-1947* by Nikolai Tolstoy, published in 1977, are also included.



impressed with his sincerity. Both were by this time rather some.

On 15 February, three British ships-Duchess of Richmond, Moreton Bay and Highland Princess- left Liverpool for Odessa with a total of 7000 Soviet prisoners. Throughout the journey, the prisoners were jumping into the sea any time they came near land; at Gibraltar and at the Dardanelles.

By now it was obvious that there was going to be trouble in the internment camps if many of the prisoners refused to go. An Anglo-Soviet commission was set up to decide on which of the prisoners were fact Soviet citizen, and which were not. Those who were judged Soviets were sent to a transit camp centered on a small hotel at newlands Corner, near Guildford,Surrey. By coincidence, next door to the hotel lived the Strachey family, whose son John Strachey was to become Minister of War in 1950. John Strachey, both a former communist and a former fascist, held no sympathy for the men. He declared that they were quislings who deserved everything that was coming to them.

The Russians had confidence in the British authorities, who(with the exception of Mr. Strachey) had always appeared sympathetic, because these prisoners too were dispatched from Hull in early 1945. All, that is, except one unfortunate man who hanged himself in a quayside warehouse; such was his desperation. The same thing happened in Liverpool. One man hanged himself at Scarsbrook Camp in Yorkshire before they set off for Liverpool, and another cut his throat at port. At the inquests, the press were 'advised' not to report the circumstances. When the ship, the Almanzora, reached Odessa, there were salvos of machine-gun fire as soon as the men had been executed because they "had sold out to the capitalist."

In May, trouble again broke out on the quayside at Liverpool when 3000 Russians were embarking on the empire Pride. 40 prisoners had to be frog-marched on board by military policemen. One of them smashed his china tea mug and proceeded to slash his own throat with the jagged edges. The Soviet liaison officers insisted that he be put, on board, despite his injuries. A doctor was called to stitch him up, there and then on the quayside. Again on the journey, men leaped overboard, although one or two were picked up by Turkish police launches and returned the Empire Pride. One of them then tried to slash his wrist with a razor blade. When he was unloaded at Odessa, a single pistol shot was heard from behind a warehouse on the quay. Twenty minutes later a covered lorrydrew up. A Canadian interpreter who later examined the warehouse reported fresh chips knocked out of the walls and stains and blotches everywhere.

After the collapse of the Nazi regime in April 1945, the British and American authorities now found it easier to repatriate the Russians direct across the occupation zone boundaries. On 2 June 1945 The Daily Herald reported that 10,000 Russians, mostly women, were passing through the lines every day. A pontoon bridge

with such claims, under the joint chairmanship of General Ratov, head of the Soviet Military Mission in Britain, and Brigadier R. Firebrace, the liaison officer between the Mission and the War Office. Ratov and Firebrace spent many distressing hours sitting in judgment over 'disputed cases', men who refused to acknowledge their citizenship. Both officers had subordinates who spoke the various languages of the area, so usually it was enough to subject the men to a simple test of speech. It was no good, for instance, for a man to claim that he came from the Western Ukraine if he spoke only Russian. He would have to show a native knowledge of Ukrainian and some knowledge of Polish, since it was to Poland that the area had belonged before the war. Neither could a man claim to be a Bait unless he spoke the relevant Baltic language, and Firebrace knew enough of these languages to be able to tell if the man was lying. The test could be applied even to old emigres, people who had spent the between-the-wars years in western Europe, for the language had changed during twenty-seven years of Soviet rule. A subtle ear could detect a difference between the Russian language of 1917 and that of 1945.

On April 12, the first such meeting took place. In eight hours of strenuous work Firebrace and Ratov dealt with fifty cases. Ratov was accompanied by four other Soviet officers, the Soviet Consul Krotov and a shorthand writer, who took down every word said by the men being interviewed. Firebrace had only one task, to decide whether or not the man in question was a Soviet citizen in 1939. If he thought he was, the man was moved to the new Soviet camp at Newlands Corner, near Guildford. If he thought not and Ratov disagreed, which he usually did, the man was placed on the 'disputed list' and kept in a separate camp to await a final decision.

On April 14, Firebrace wrote a plaintive letter to Christopher Warner at the Foreign Office:

You have given me a most unpleasant task as, with few exceptions, the men, whether claiming Soviet or Polish nationality, protest violently at being sent back to the Soviet Union or even to their homes in Poland. A large number insisted on giving reasons for their not wishing to go back and related with wealth of detail their experiences in the Soviet Union or in Poland after the entry

But this was the only time Firebrace saved a man by a deliberate lie. 'I wish I could have saved more, but it wasn't possible, my orders were so clear,' he says. He knew that if he consistently bent the rules he would bring down upon his head the wrath not only of Ratov, but also of his superiors and especially of the Foreign Office. True, the prisoners were in Britain and under Britain's control, but Ratov lost no time in making clear what would happen if he did not get his way and obtain the custody of all undoubted Soviet citizens. During lunch at Newlands Corner Camp on April 11 he had an argument with Firebrace, during which he said that if Britain acted in this way the Soviet authorities would have to retain fifty British prisoners-of-war in Odessa. 'And how would you like that?' he snapped. Cool as a cucumber, Firebrace replied, 'Unless your remark is a very poor joke I will report it to higher authority.' But though he did his best to sound unconcerned, in his heart Firebrace knew that the Soviet authorities were quite capable of doing such a thing, and that if they did so he personally would be blamed for the consequent suffering inflicted on British soldiers.

Firebrace was one of the first officers to be put into this horrifying moral situation, to be called upon to do something which personally revolted him in order to fulfil the demands of higher policy. He was told that there were sound reasons why the Agreement had been signed and why it had to be observed. Whether he thought it right or not, it was not his job to challenge it and it would have been absurd for him to try to do so. He had only a small part of the information which had been available to the diplomats who negotiated it. He could not take the broad view. All he knew was that it was forcing him to do work which he found morally repugnant.

There was one individual case, concerning Ivan Sidorov and his wife Nataliya, which illustrates particularly well the dilemma and the moral burden which the Agreement imposed on officers and diplomats. Sidorov was born in 1914 in southern Russia

ever he entered Russia and that his only way out was to convince the British that he was not a Soviet citizen. So he pretended to be a Pole. His problem was that he then had to appear before the Anglo-Soviet commission on repatriation. Both Ratov and Firebrace had Polish-speaking officers with them specifically to deal with such claimants and they could tell at once that his Polish was almost non-existent, while his Russian was perfect. During the interview he started shouting abuse at Ratov and the Soviet officers. As a result his name was noted and the Soviet side became insistent that he be handed over.

Up to this point Sidorov's story was not an unusual one. Many of the Russian prisoners brought to England were resisting repatriation just as frantically. Many of them had wives in England too. But Ivan and Nataliya had two vital pieces of luck. The first was that Nataliya had been expecting a child when she was captured by the Americans, and this child was born in January 1945 in Retford. By being born in England the little boy was automatically a British subject. As parents of a British subject the Sidorovs now had a stronger claim than the rest to be allowed to remain in the United Kingdom.

Their second piece of luck was in obtaining an introduction to Ethel Christie, a British Quaker who had done enthusiastic relief work in Russia during the famines of the 1920s. She began to agitate on the Sidorovs' behalf. Her efforts made it clear to the authorities that they would not be able to dispose of the family quietly. If they sent the Sidorovs home, with or without their British baby, there would undoubtedly be a scandal.

Had it not been for their son and for the help of Ethel Christie the Sidorovs would have quickly been transferred to the camp for Soviet citizens at Newlands Corner in Surrey. And once there they would only have had a short time to wait before a boat was available to take them to Russia. In Foreign Office memoranda various officials outlined the case against the family. Enquiries had been made with Polish groups in Britain, but they knew nothing of Sidorov. On the basis of this and of his interview before the mixed commission, Firebrace said that he was ninety per cent certain that Sidorov was Russian. Poles had told him that they found it impossible to believe that a man could have lived for more than twenty years between the wars in the Tarnopol area, as Sidorov claimed, without learning to speak adequate

DEATH ON THE QUAYSIDE

THOSE less lucky than 'Sidorov', once the Ratov-Firebrace commission had declared them to be Soviet citizens, were sent to Newlands Corner, a camp centred round a weekend hotel near Guildford in Surrey. Letitia Fairfield, a well-known lawyer and the sister of the famous writer on treason, Rebecca West, used to visit the camp often during the spring of 1945, staying next door to it with her friends the Stracheys. The son of the house was John Strachey, a former communist who in 1950 was to become Britain's Minister of War. She recalls: 'John Strachey was quite merciless. He said that they were quislings because they had been found in German uniform and that they deserved everything that was coming to them. As usual, he was excusing the Soviet Russians for everything they did.'

Miss Fairfield took a more sympathetic view of the inmates, as did the British commandant, a Russian scholar who appreciated what the men under his charge had been through in recent years. 'His compassion and kindness towards them and his human sympathy was one of the most moving things I ever saw,' she says. She and John Strachey's mother used to save pieces of chocolate for the prisoners out of their rations and occasionally invite them to tea. Although forbidden to leave the camp without permission, they were not surrounded by barbed wire. There was little likelihood of escape attempts. They had no money, ration books or identity cards, little knowledge of English and no one to whom they could turn for help. Anyone who did escape would not get very far.

The prisoners never numbered more than a few hundred and they were housed in huts hastily constructed in the hotel garden. The commandant arranged concerts for them and provided them with radio sets. Such consideration reassured the prisoners, leading them to believe that they would not in fact be sent home to Russia. Having appeared before the commission they were of course marked men and could expect the worst if **ever** the

Extracts mentioning Newlands Corner from *Victims of Yalta – The Secret Betrayal of the Allies 1944-1947* by Nikolai Tolstoy, published in 1977.

Page 107

In April General Ratov, who had arrived in Britain to organise the repatriation, requested of Brigadier Firebrace that he should provide British guards and prison facilities for some of the men. Ratov had placed ten under arrest: 'They are all cases of men who have stated that they refuse to return to the Soviet Union. Some of them are desperate and have openly threatened suicide in preference to returning home.' Firebrace arranged temporarily for the offenders' detention, but 'told General Ratov that I expected him to make arrangements to guard his own men at the Soviet Camp at Newlands Corner. He told me that he did not think that he could do this as his men were not armed and he did not think that the Soviet Government would give permission for them to be armed.'

Page 147

More fortunate were three Latvians, who on 1 May 1945 escaped from the camp at Newlands Corner, Guildford. Suspecting the fate accorded to unsuccessful claimants to the 'disputed' list, they had asserted their Latvian nationality before Brigadier Firebrace and General Ratov. But near the camp lived a Latvian lady married to an Englishman, Mrs. Anna Child, who spoke to them and warned them of the situation. She advised them to escape and go to the Latvian Legation in Eaton Place. This they did, only to find themselves amongst officials almost as terrified as themselves. As Mrs. Child told me, 'to my under-

Page 148

-standing they appeared too scared to talk, or to do anything to aid in the cause'. Mr Zarine and his staff were in a state of the most lively fear lest the British Government, in their efforts to placate Stalin, should find it expedient to repatriate them too. However, all was well, as the Foreign Office, in the words of Geoffrey Wilson, felt obliged 'to act quickly in order to avoid the risk of a serious public scandal'. Provided with assurances that they would as Latvians not be repatriated against their will, they spent a few days in the Legation. They were then transferred to a PoW camp for non-Soviet citizens and ultimately released.⁸⁶

By the middle of 1945 most of the Russians in camps in Britain had been returned. It was no longer necessary to make arrangements for long voyages, as with the collapse of Germany the prisoners could be returned overland. The last major consignment—the eighth—to make the journey was a party of 335 Russians, who travelled in the middle of August from the camp at Newlands Corner to the Soviet Zone of Germany, via Dover and Ostend. Captain Crichton of the Russian Liaison Group, who accompanied them, was alternately amused and disgusted at the conduct of the three Soviet

officers in charge. Clearly the Soviets were as frightened as the Foreign Office of the possibility that the British public might find out what was happening. 'Major Gruzdiev . . . accused Lieut. Col. Ludford of having purposely stopped the lorry containing the arrested men so that they had to be marched in full view of the general public.' Captain Crichton was also subjected to a tirade from Gruzdiev when he incautiously suggested that the officers might travel alongside the men; he was later intrigued to find the same officers arrested by the orders of the Soviets on their arrival at Luneburg.

Page 451

⁸⁶ WO.32/11647; information from Mrs. Child, my uncle the late Mr. Auguste Bergman (Minister at the Estonian Legation), and the Latvian Legation in London. As Brigadier Firebrace pointed out to me, the anticipated fate awaiting an unsuccessful attempt to get on the Disputed List led very many non-Soviet citizens to accept repatriation and trust to their luck.

Page 490

Narishkin, Captain, 113, 116, 117 Natural History Museum, London, 67 Naumenko, General Vyacheslav, 152, 219, 4370, 439n Nekrassov, Viktor, 23 Newlands Corner, Guildford, camp at, 107, 147, 148 News Chronicle, 21 Newsam, Sir Frank, 107-8 Nicholls, Major Ian, 316-17, 318 NKVD involvement in repatriation of Soviet citizens, 19, 27, 39, 40, 50, 59, 65-8, 87, 138, 139, 204-5, 248, 202, 338, 379, 388, 392, 400-5, 409, 447n massacres of slaves in 1941, 440n operations in France, 374-8 secret figures of total repatriations, 408-9 training school at Babushkin, 130 treatment of returned prisoners in USSR, 129, 181, 188, 191, 196, 215, 244, 247, 250, 270, 401-3 Norway repatriation of Russian prisoners and slave-workers, 316-21, 320 Novikov, Nikolai, 94, 103, 105, 106, 324, 325, 376 Novogradok, Cossack settlement at, 151- 2, 178-9, 197, 224 Nuremberg Tribunal, ruling on responsibility for War Crimes, 348, 358



Newlands Corner Camp, originally used by British and Canadian troops before the D-Day landings and subsequently by Cossack prisoners of war, photographed by the RAF on 26th April 1948 showing around 50 Nissen huts, south of Newlands Corner Hotel and to the north west between Trodds Lane and Shere Road, before they were removed.

A jug with Cyrillic writing on it was reportedly found at Newlands Corner.

The play *Not The Cossacks* by Jean Binnie, dramatised by Stephen Wyatt for BBC Radio 4 in March 2023 as *The Song of the Cossacks*, examines the dilemma of ordinary army officers ordered to betray the people whose trust they had gained and whose welfare they had been in charge of.

Play synopsis:

Two acts. An Officer in the British army with his Sergeant becomes an honoured friend to a group of exiles, becoming attached to a woman in the group. However, Whitehall plans the repatriation of all the exiles who are inconvenient. In the chaotic aftermath of the 2nd World War, the order comes for the Officer and his Sergeant to find a way, some kind of trick, to repatriate the exiles who now trust the British. Still trusting the British, the exiles go to their deaths. The Officer has to confront what he did and longs to be accused of a war crime in order that the story shall be told.

Spectator 25 February 1978

Yalta: how to right the wrong

Nicholas Bethell

Thirty-three years ago a woman now living in London was subjected by British authorities to two years of extreme distress. Born in Russia, eighteen years old and pregnant, she was brought to England in mid-1944, when her husband was captured in western France. He had been conscripted into a German-organised para-military unit, she worked in the cookhouse. She was treated (quite illegally, because she was in no way subject to the military discipline of the Allied Forces Act, 1940), her son was born. The Yalta agreement was signed and preparations were made to return the family to Russia where, the Foreign Office assumed, both parents would probably be executed. About all the Russian men and women brought home from France were, in fact, bundled off without notice or ceremony to Solzhenitsyn's labour camps and living squads.

She was one of the few lucky ones. Her case was given a hearing. She was, after all, the mother of a British subject by birth. A member of the Quaker movement befriended her and arranged an interview for her at the Foreign Office. Thomas Brimbleton was the official who received her: 'She fell on her knees, placed her forehead on the ground in the traditional Russian manner and implored me assistance in saving her and her husband from deportation. I said that I could not give her any explicit assurances as no decision regarding the fate of herself and her child had yet been taken.'

Incidentally, they were allowed to stay in Britain, not for any humanitarian reason, but because Anthony Eden and his colleagues were afraid of a row in Parliament and the press. She got her husband back at the end of 1946 and lived happily with him until his death last year. Her thirty-three-year-old son is a schoolteacher in the Midlands. He survived, but anyone who knows her can see how deeply and permanently her anxieties have been marked by these two years of lonely uncertainty.

In May 1943 about 2,000 Cossack officers, old recruits who had fought more than twenty years in Germany or Yugoslavia and had never been under Soviet rule, were shipped into a cage by British lies and delivered to the Red Army. It was alleged that they were traitors - an absurdity which persuaded Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper's comment: 'They were traitors in the sense in which the Hageners who fought for William of Orange were traitors to Louis XIV'. The question who exactly betrayed this violation of the Yalta agreement has been the subject of some speculation in the Spectator and it remains unanswered, even after the opening a few days ago of 'missing the 1817-14'. In the mid-1950s, after full apology and pay punitive damages.

The Government knows the name of the lady referred to in my first paragraph. Without waiting for her request - she would not make it, she is grateful to this country - they can pay her a substantial sum out of public funds. They can then acquire through the local authority a plot of land at Newlands Corner, near Guildford, the site of the camp through which confirmed Soviet citizens passed on their way to ships in Hull and Liverpool. A memorial can be erected to commemorate those Russians who committed suicide at Newlands Corner or on the quayside, as well as those who perished in the Soviet Union.

I can trace instances of the illegally deported Cossack officers who are still alive, eleven in Malack and three in Paris. They too can be compensated out of public funds. It must be remembered that they were not defeated by British forces in battle, they surrendered voluntarily a few days before the war ended. Then in the matter of their families allow all their property, including important jewellery and the contents of the contemporary bank, was acquired by British forces. Compensation would cover not only the actual matter of this material loss, but also the ten years in Soviet camps, with due regard to the conditions of the imprisonment, and would be scaled up to reach the moment of an appropriate token for the sufferings and deaths of the others.

The Cossack dispersal camp is a small temporary port outside Leningrad, where about thirty of those who were killed or committed suicide while being loaded into trains are buried. After some difficulty, including Soviet protests to the Australian government, they have got permission to build a chapel on the spot. They say that Churchill-Brown Kreisky intervened in their favour after the Latvian local authorities had several times refused them. They are collecting and appealing for money to build the chapel. No large sum is needed. They mention a figure of £7,000. The British nation may well decide that it is its duty to pay this sum in full.

And what about an apology? How can a nation apologise for the death of a million people? Every German knows that this is taken issue. It is unfair, I believe, to compare Britain's offence with that of Nazi Germany, but I would prefer not to dwell on such a particularly odious comparison. Instead I recall the great good which Germany did in December 1975 when Willy Brandt went down on his knees in silence before the memorial on the site of the Warsaw ghetto. Why could he do such a thing in Russia's name? Why? How? I do not know the answer to this vexatious problem. But I know a growing feeling that someone at this juncture will have to, and soon, before this long-buried ghost from the past creates a sense of national taboos.

Asherton Waugh is away and will become ill unless he returns very soon.

In Yalta: how to right the wrong, Nicholas Bethell proposed a memorial at Newlands Corner.



The Spectator, 25th February 1978, page 6 extract:

Solzhenitsyn could quote many more examples. This is why he told us in 1976 that our whole nation had committed a sin and wrote, after seeing the BBC film on the subject, 'This film recreates in some degree the sharp pain of our Russian suffering - the sufferings of millions of people betrayed and handed over to a certain death by the British administration of the time. Some of these people perished in front of my eyes.' He would agree with Monday's eloquent Times leader that something should be done.

The Times made several valid points. The House of Commons and ministers were misled by officials. There should therefore be an inquiry and the officials involved should no longer feel inhibited about stating their side of the case. But if that inquiry concludes that a catastrophically unjust decision was taken - and this for the moment seems to be the view of public opinion = the question will arise, what happens next? If a wrong was done, what can be done to undo it? Not very much. Most of the victims are dead. But we can still do something. Solzhenitsyn, a religious man, has suggested an answer in religious terms repentance and expiation. Perhaps it is more practical to put the matter in legal terms. Britain can make a full apology and pay punitive damages.

The Government knows the name of the lady referred to in my first paragraph. Without waiting for her request - she would not make it - she is grateful to this country they can pay her a substantial sum out of public funds. They can then acquire through the local authority a plot of land at Newlands Corner, near Guildford, the site of the camp through which confirmed Soviet citizens passed on their way to ships in Hull and Liverpool. A memorial can be erected to commemorate those Russians who committed suicide at Newlands Corner or on the quayside, as well as those who perished in the Soviet Union.



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ON BRITAIN'S CONSCIENCE

A nation's attitude to its past conditions its responses to the present. If it sweeps its crimes under the carpet it heightens the risk of repeating them and it perpetuates a false image of itself which is liable to distort its other perceptions. One of the darkest blot on the British record is the forcible repatriation of very large numbers of Soviet citizens at the end of the Second World War. Some committed suicide rather than return. Many were murdered the moment they reached Soviet soil. Many more died in camps in appalling conditions. A few survived. Solzhenitsyn came across some in the Gulag Archipelago, but the story could not be told in detail until the Foreign Office papers were released under the thirty-year rule. Then Lord Bethell wrote *The Last Secret*, published in 1974. Now an even fuller account is available in a larger book by Count Nikolai Tolstoy, *Victims of Yalta*.

Both books make harrowing reading not only because of the appalling suffering of the victims but also because of the cold blindness of the British politicians and officials who sent them to their fate. Only a handful of men emerge with any credit, notably Lord Selborne, Field Marshal Alexander, and some of the soldiers who bent or resisted the orders to drive these people to their deaths. For the rest it is a story of wrong assessments leading to wrong decisions which were then carried out with heartless and unnecessary rigidity. There were also attempts to conceal what was happening from the public, from ministers and from Parliament. It is this last point which makes necessary not only a moral and historical evaluation but also a more formal re-examination.

Force and trickery

The basic facts are that as the war drew to a close there were several million people who could be called Soviet citizens scattered around western Europe. Some were prisoners of war. Some had been taken as slave labourers by the Nazis. Some had left Russia long before the war. Some were from the Baltic states forcibly taken over by Stalin. About a million were in German uniforms. Stalin wanted them all back. He feared they might form the nucleus of an émigré army, and in any case he had made it clear in word and deed that any Russian soldier taken prisoner by the Germans was to be regarded as a traitor. Anthony Eden, then British Foreign Secretary, who had acquired an exaggerated respect for Stalin, agreed. The agreement was inserted in the Yalta agreement and was carried out over the next two years using a mixture of force and trickery.

The case for the defence of British policy, as outlined in part by Eden himself, runs broadly as follows. The Russians were allies and were fighting with Britain and America against Nazi Germany. Their cooperation was necessary in wartime and would be necessary in the peace that followed. The British national interest in fostering that cooperation was more important than the fate of the individuals concerned. Furthermore the Russians were advanc-

ing through Germany and taking over camps in which British prisoners were held. These prisoners might be held as hostages if the Russians were not returned. Finally, Russians serving in German uniforms were enemies of Britain and were also traitors to their own country. They could not claim the protection of the Geneva Convention, it was claimed, and anyway they did not deserve any sympathy.

The case for the prosecution is that very little of this stands up to examination. Russian intentions were badly misjudged. Whatever cooperation with the Russians was possible was not dependent on forcible repatriation. In any case cooperation began to break down after the war and Stalin soon broke the Yalta agreement, notably over Poland. Yet the repatriations were stubbornly and brutally continued. Nor has any evidence been found that the Russians were prepared to hold British soldiers hostage against the return of Soviet citizens. Certainly no attempt was made to test whether they would. The Americans were far less ready than the British to repatriate the unwilling and they still got their own soldiers back. Moreover the repatriations continued even after all the British soldiers were home.

It was also wrong to apply simple categories of loyalty and treachery to wartime Russia. Some of the Russians in German uniform thought they were fighting communism, not Russia. Some had been captured by the Germans, starved, beaten and forced into German uniform at pistol point. Others simply knew that Stalin's policy was to shoot returning prisoners of war, so they preferred a chance of life in another uniform. This factor also gives support to the legal argument that because their state had withdrawn its protection from them they were relieved of their duty to be loyal. The state betrayed them, not they the state.

There were also civilians, including women and children, some of whom were illegally detained in Britain. They were sent back to their deaths in disregard of Britain's traditional willingness to grant refuge to the oppressed. This problem was dismissed by the Foreign Office with the words: "Any attempt to draw a line between traitors and refugees would lead to interminable wrangles with the Soviet authorities. We are therefore in favour of avoiding discrimination."

The case for the prosecution is particularly harsh on the officials who carried out and in most cases supported the policy. They were doing more than their minimal duty in implementing a political decision, and some of their writings make alarming reading. Mr Patrick Dean, then Assistant Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, wrote in June, 1944: "In due course all those with whom the Soviet authorities desire to deal must, subject to what is said below, be handed over to them, and we are not concerned with the fact that they may be shot or otherwise more harshly dealt with than they might be under English law." Mr Thomas Brimelow, then a junior official in the Foreign

Office, wrote on Christmas Day, 1945: "We consider that all Soviet citizens should be repatriated, forcibly if necessary." Presumably a Foreign Office brief lay behind the erroneous information given to the House of Commons by Mr Christopher Mayhew, then a junior minister, on May 21, 1947. Replying to a question by Mr Stokes, he said there had been no attempted suicides in Operation Eastwind. And this is not the only evidence of attempts to conceal the full horror of what was happening from the public, from Parliament, and even from Mr Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, who was persuaded to overcome his doubts about continuing the policy of his predecessor.

The whole episode is not just a bit of tragic history best forgotten. The facts have only recently become generally available. They are a matter of public concern because they involve the public policies of this country and the way these policies were arrived at and implemented. They point to serious and damaging mistakes in the past and raise important issues for the present. They also provide a valuable reminder of the dangers of excluding elementary considerations of justice and humanity from the conduct of diplomacy in the misguided belief that this can serve the national interest.

Seek guidance

There are now two specific things that need to happen. First, British officials and politicians stand accused of giving wrong advice, promoting wrong policies and causing the deaths of many innocent people. The civil servants concerned are permitted by the Radcliffe guidelines to prepare memoirs after a gap of fifteen years since the events they describe. The thirty-year rule applies to the documents in which their policy advice is contained. In dealing with the period 1944-47 they are well clear on both counts. In cases of doubt, they must seek guidance from their former department. They should approach Dr Owen on this matter. The Foreign Secretary should give them carte blanche to present Parliament and public with their versions of forcible repatriation. Mr Harold Macmillan, as Minister of State for the Mediterranean theatre in 1944-45, should lend his great authority to the process of disclosure by telling all he knows. The case for the prosecution has been powerfully presented by Lord Bethell and Count Tolstoy. The defence, if defence there be, has yet to be heard.

Secondly, it is reasonably clear that Parliament was misinformed on May 21, 1947. Now that the relevant papers are available, and while some of those who wrote them are still alive, it would be wholly appropriate for a parliamentary committee to inquire into whether this was deliberate. In the process it could scarcely avoid some review of the policies involved. The principle of truthful disclosure to Parliament needs to be jealously defended, and if Parliament will not go back when it discovers past breaches of this principle its determination to defend it in the present will be in doubt. In this matter it can also act as the conscience of the nation.

ON BRITAIN'S CONSCIENCE

Times editorial of 20 February 1978 referred to by Nicholas Bethell in the Spectator article above.

SOME DETAILS OF THE CHILD FAMILY

From Nikolai Tolstoy's book:

"... near the camp lived a Latvian lady married to an Englishman, Mrs. Anna Child..."

Anna Child's maiden name was Leischkaln - a Latvian name. She married Maurice Child in 1921 in Paddington and they were living together in London/Middlesex in the 1921 census.

In the 1939 Register they were at Tudor Hall, Orchard Square, Bradwell-on-Sea near Maldon, Essex. This seems an earlier name for the '16C or earlier' listed New Hall, beside Orchard Square.

They also had a servant at Tudor Hall suggesting they were quite well off.

Maurice Child, born on 27 July 1885, was a Wireless Telegraph Engineer.

Anna Child/Leischkaln was born on 28 May 1893.

Dorothea Charlotte Leischkaln, born 14 January 1900, living with them was Anna's unmarried sister. She died in 1979 in Woking.

Trine Leischkaln, a widow born 9 March 1862, also living with them was presumably Anna's mother. Trine died in 1944 in Surrey SW.

Their adopted daughter, Antonina Ann, born 1933 is represented by the redacted 1939 Register entry.

RESEARCH: SYLVIA DAINTRY

Maurice Child, callsigns NWX and 2DC, of 60 Ashworth Mansions, Maida Vale, W.9, and 'Director of Company', was a founder of the Radio Society of Great Britain, incorporated on 22 July 1926, honorary secretary in 1928 and became a Life Vice-President of the RSGB in 1930. He was involved in many early developments in radio, published articles and was President of Guildford Model Engineering Society and Guildford District Radio Society.

In 1947, dissatisfied with Compensation Act payments, Maurice Child claimed against the RAF for damage to Tudor Hall, presumably resulting from its use by staff stationed at nearby RAF Bradwell Bay from 1942 onwards.

Requisition of Tudor Hall provoked the move by the family to Guildford during the war.

Maurice Child joined Surrey Archaeological Society in 1948, at Gortraney (nowadays No.68), Horseshoe Lane East, Merrow and he and Anna lived there until downsizing to 16 St. Margaret's, London Road, Guildford in the 1960s.

Another radio amateur, Brian Grist G3GJX, born in 1925, lived at Gortraney next, later moving to Witley.

Gortraney was built c1935; Owner: Dr J H Reford, Architect: Annesley-Brownrigg & Hiscock.

There were musical accomplishments in the family, with various reports in the Chelmsford Chronicle - 5 November 1937: "...violin solos by Mr. Maurice Child". In 1939 on 6 January: "*The proceedings ended with the singing of Auld Lang Syne accompanied by Mr. Maurice Child at the piano*"; on 24 March: "*The words of this hymn were written before the war by Mrs. Astley, and the music was composed this year by Mr. Maurice Child, both of whom Bradwell is proud to claim as residents. It was the first performance of Mr. Child's music...*"; on 19 May: "*Incidental music was played by Mr.*

Maurice Child"; and on 17 May 1940: "...in the Village Hall a large and appreciative audience assembled, and an enjoyable programme was compered by Mr Maurice Child."

Later, daughter Antonina appears. The Surrey Advertiser of 11 November 1944 reported: "*Antonina Child qualified for Intermediate County scholarships*"; and also documents many performances by Antonina, including 9 March 1955 at Onslow Hall; on 6 December 1961 at Guildford Theatre: "*The soloists have been well chosen: ANTONINA CHILD, soprano, is a citizen of Guildford, now at the Sadlers Wells Opera Company. It has been her ambition for some time to sing this work in her native town and those who have heard her other music at municipal concerts know that she is a singer Guildford can be proud of. Her lovely voice and its power to match the dramatic moments of the music well suited Handel's style*"; on 11 November 1961: "*The soprano Antonina Child was appearing in "Messiah" at her Guildford home town for the first time and after a slightly faltering start sang attractively*"; and on 24 October 1962: "*There a strong lyrical quality from Antonina Child who also a strong feeling for character...*".



SGT. SYLVIA CLAYSON is one of the W.R.A.C. members who, equipped with "walkie - talkie" radio sets, have been patrolling Guildford streets this week as part of the local recruiting drive for the Women's Territorial Army. Misses Joyce Lockwood, Biddy Taylor, Antonina Child and Suzanne Gammon are pictured asking questions about the Service by radio telephone to the control post at the Odeon. —
PHOTO: R. Bennett - Surrey Advertiser, 2 April 1949.

In 1988 the British Vintage Wireless Society reported: "*Guildford and District Radio Society tell us that the Maurice Child collection of vintage hardware will at last find a permanent home on display at the Fort Widley Museum, which is being set up by the Communication and Electronic Charitable Trust, apart from one small item in the Guildford Museum. Don't all rush down to Portsmouth tomorrow for it will take time. Now here's a strange problem associated with this situation: the hardware is there, but next to nothing in the way of written material either by or about the man himself. Yet Maurice Child was an extremely active and inventive person in the early days of wireless, meriting several mentions in Blake's magnum opus, and lived a long and full life. Where his books and personal papers went is a mystery, and it is here that BVWS members might be able to help. Does anybody have any other references to his work, to his birth, and his possessions? Does anybody have a book with his signature on the flyleaf, even? I'll be happy to pass on to the archivist of the Guildford and District Radio Society any information you can send me.*"

In 1996, the RSGB acquired the Maurice Child collection, including: "*a rare Siemens spark transmitter circa 1900 and a Marconi 'professional' crystal receiver of 1918*".



Anna lived in Riga, Latvia and came to England on a British troop ship during the Russian Revolution.

She initially knew no English but was very determined and resourceful and managed to get herself trained in England as a State Registered Nurse.

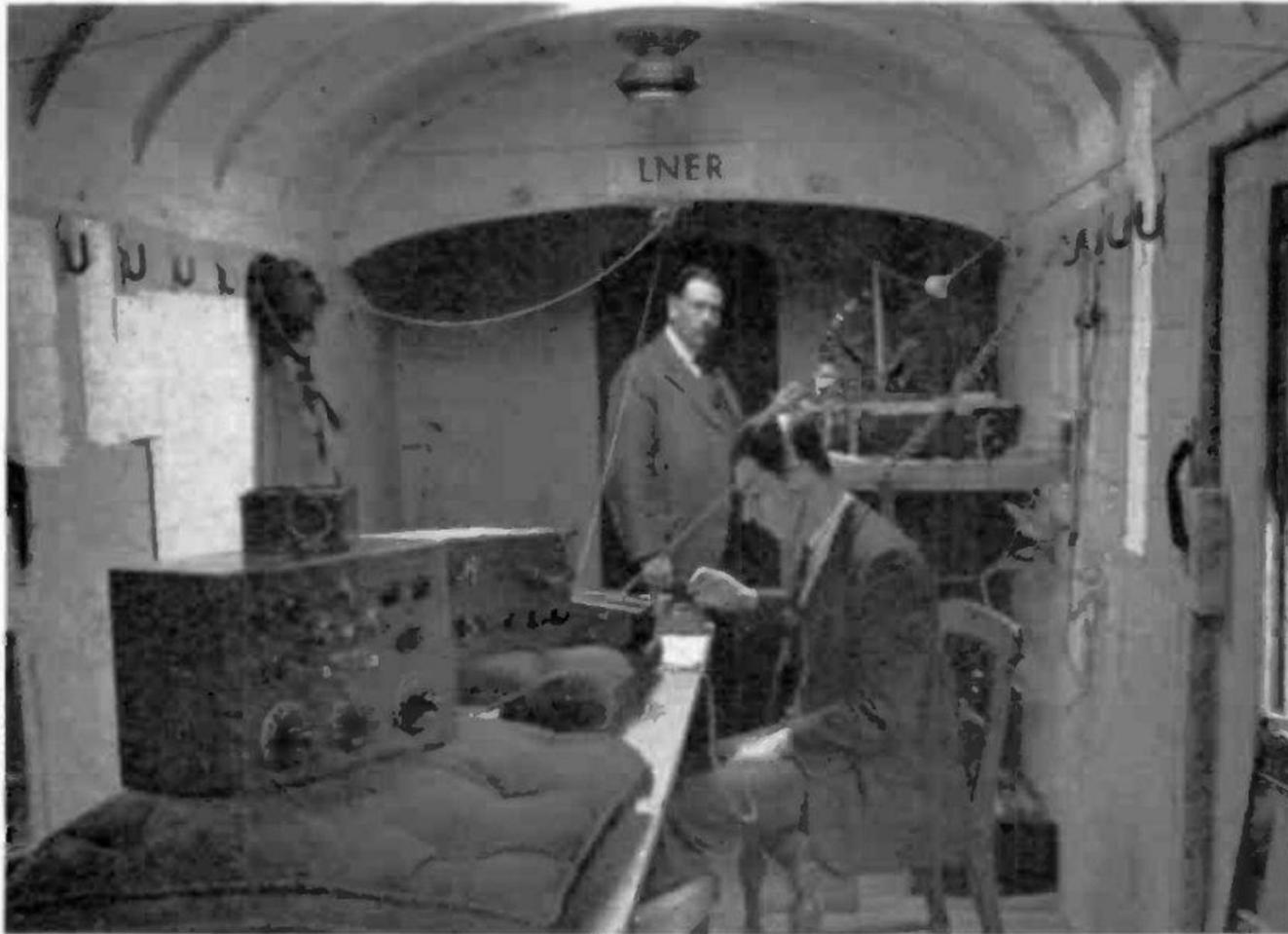
She had married Maurice Child and brought her sister Dorothea over from Latvia to live with them.

Anna bought some kind of nursing home in Hampstead, London. Antonina was born there in 1933 to an unmarried mother and Anna and Maurice adopted her.

Following the requisition of Tudor Hall, it seems Antonina was brought up near Guildford, in an isolated house in the woods in the middle of Puttenham Common and then at Gortraney in Merrow.



PHOTOS: KATE TATTERSHALL



Radio coach 6ZZ left King's Cross station on July 5, 1924, attached to the 7.38 p.m. Scottish express of the (then) London and North Eastern Railway. The occasion was an experiment carried out by members of the Radio Society of Great Britain to test the practicability of maintaining radio communication between a train travelling at high speed and fixed stations along the route using amateur equipment. In this picture **Maurice Child** is at the key and Leslie McMichael is adjusting the transmitter which operated on 182.5 metres. Two-way contact was established with 2WD (Bedford), 5DR (Sheffield), 2DR (Shipley) and 5MO (Newcastle-on-Tyne).



6 ZZ's equipment. The operating staff from left to right :—Mr. Leslie McMichael, Mr. Philip R. Coursey, Mr. Maurice Child, Mr. H. Andrewes, and Mr. F. H. Haynes.



To live in Malta

The wedding took place at St. John's Church, Merrow, on Saturday of Miss Antonina Child, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Child, of 16 St. Margaret's, London Road, Guildford, and Mr. Richard James Rayson, the younger son of Mrs. Gertrude Rayson, and the late Mr. William Rayson, of Sinodun, Quarry Road, Headington, Oxford.

The bride was given away by her father. Mr. John Rayson, the bridegroom's brother, was the best man.

The service was conducted by the Rev. A. E. Ford. Mr. G. R. F. Bryant was the organist and Miss Margaret Morris was the soloist.

Two three-years-old page boys, Master Marcus Woodgreaves and Master William Rayson, who are godsons of the bride and groom, were in attendance.

Mr. J. E. Harvey was groomsman.

The reception was held at the Newlands Corner Hotel.

The couple are spending their short honeymoon touring before settling in Malta, where the bridegroom has recently taken up an appointment at the university.

[Photo: T. A. Wilkie]

Maurice and Anna Child's daughter, Antonina Ann, married Richard James Rayson at St John's Church, Merrow on 7th August 1965.

Richard Rayson was at the University of Malta and their two children were born in Malta in 1967 (Michael) and November 1968 (Catherine).

Deaths

CARTER, Arthur E. V. — Suddenly at home, after a short illness, April 11th, 1970.

CHILD. — On April 10th, 1970, peacefully at his home, St. Margaret's, London Road, Guildford, Maurice Child, aged 85 years, loving husband of Anna and dear father of Antonin, grandad of Michael and Catherine. Cremation took place privately. No letters, please.

Maurice Child died on 10th April 1970 aged 85 at home, 16 St. Margaret's, London Road, Guildford.

Anna Child died in Surrey SW in 1980.

From Guildford and District Radio Society member Barry Flisher:

"I was an active member of GRS back in the 1960s. We had our oldest member Maurice Child, then in his 80s.

He had met Marconi and many other pioneers of radio and was an expert in direction finding, and worked on it in WW2. He also drove a beautiful Bentley Six Speed in British Racing Green."

PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

MUNICIPAL ORCHESTRA

Leader: TATE GILDER

Guildford Corporation Concerts

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: VERNON HANDLEY

SATURDAY, 20th OCTOBER, 1962, at 7 p.m.

CIVIC HALL

Concert Version of

NABUCCO (*Verdi*)

Guest Conductor: IVOR JOHN

PROGRAMME - - SIXPENCE

CONCERT VERSION OF

NABUCCO *Verdi*

ABIGAIL - - - - - ELIZABETH VAUGHAN

FENENA - - - - - ANTONINA CHILD

ISHMAEL and ABDULLAH - ANDREW GOLD

NABUCCO - - - - - BRYAN DRAKE

ZACHARIAH - - - - - GERWYN MORGAN

THE STORY OF THE OPERA

ACT I. After the Sinfonia the curtain rises to show us the
Jews praying for deliverance from the Assyrians.

Antonina Child performed
as Fenena in Verdi's
Nabucco with the
Philharmonic Choir
(later Vivace Chorus) at
Guildford Civic Hall on
20th October 1962.