



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

5 March 1980

*Ls  
Punt*

*See Lord Bethell*

MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF YALTA

Thank you for your letter of 29 February, which I understand you discussed with Paul Bristow of my office earlier today. As he explained, we can accept the majority of your points on the wording of the inscription. Could I now suggest a version on the following lines:

"This memorial was placed here by Members of Parliament of all parties, and others, to commemorate the thousands of innocent men, women, and children from Russia and other East European nations who were imprisoned and died at the hands of Communist Governments after their return to their homelands at the conclusion of the second world war."

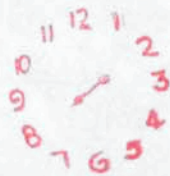
I very much hope that this will be acceptable to you and your colleagues.

I am copying this to Bernard Braine - I hope he feels it serves also as a reply to his letter of 29 February - and to John Jolliffe.

*yes*

MICHAEL HESELTINE

- 6 MAR 1980





Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 March 1980

NRB

Point 5/3

Dear Paul,

## MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF YALTA

Thank you for your letter of 29 February to Colin Munro enclosing a copy of Lord Bethell's letter to Mr Heseltine of the same day and your letter of 3 March enclosing a copy of Sir Bernard Braine's letter to Mr Heseltine of 29 February.

Mr Blaker does not think that the deletion of the words "by Britain and her Allies" from the original inscription proposed by Lord Bethell and Sir Bernard Braine is enough to meet the Prime Minister's requirements that the inscription should be uncontroversial and avoid imputing guilt to previous British Governments. He has the following further comments on Lord Bethell's points:

Points 1 and 2. He is prepared to accept the inclusion of the words "thousands" and "innocent".

Point 3. We believe that the number of people forcibly repatriated who had left Russia before the Soviet Union was formed is very small. However, it is a documented fact that a small number of such people were repatriated in error, and Mr Blaker is not therefore inclined to advise Mr Heseltine to take issue with Lord Bethell on this point.

Point 5. Mr Blaker thinks that the words "delivered against their will to imprisonment and death at the hands of Communist Governments" represent a point of real difficulty. Even with the deletion of "by Britain and her Allies", Mr Blaker considers that these words imply strong criticism of previous British Governments particularly when placed, as they are, in juxtaposition with the word "innocent". This is because only British and other Governments can logically be the subject of the verb "delivered"; because there is a strong implication that the Governments concerned were fully aware that the consequences of their policies were mass death and imprisonment; and because the words give the strong impression that imprisonment and death were as much the responsibility of the British and other Governments concerned as of the Communist Governments. Mr Blaker believes that these imputations of guilt can only be avoided by omission of the words "delivered against their will".

/Lord

P N Bristow Esq  
Private Secretary  
Department of the Environment



Lord Bethell does not specifically pick up the substitution in our alternative inscription of "at the conclusion of the second world war" for "between 1943 and 1947". Mr Blaker prefers "at the conclusion of the second world war" or "at the close of the second world war" for historical reasons. Very few people were repatriated as early as 1943. However, this is not a sticking point.

Mr Blaker therefore considers that an inscription which meets the Prime Minister's requirements and yet is quite close to what Lord Bethell and Sir Bernard Braine have proposed would be:

"This memorial was placed here by Members of Parliament of all parties, and others, to commemorate the thousands of innocent men, women, and children from Russia and other East European nations who were imprisoned and died at the hands of Communist Governments after their return to their homelands at the conclusion of the second world war."

I am sending copies of this letter to Michael Alexander (No 10) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely*  
*Charles A Hamilton*

Charles A Hamilton  
APS/Mr Blaker



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

3 March 1980

*Ls  
P.N.*

*Dear Colin*

MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF YALTA

Further to my letter to you of Friday last, I am now sending you a copy of the letter which my Secretary of State has today received from Sir Bernard Braine and which argues for the same wording for the proposed inscription as did Lord Bethell in his letter of 29 February.

I would be grateful if you could take account of Sir Bernard's letter in the advice which I have asked you to provide by tomorrow (Tuesday 4th).

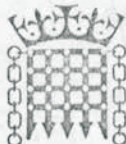
I am copying this to Michael Alexander (No 10) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely  
Paul Bristow*

P N BRISTOW  
Private Secretary

Colin Monro Esq

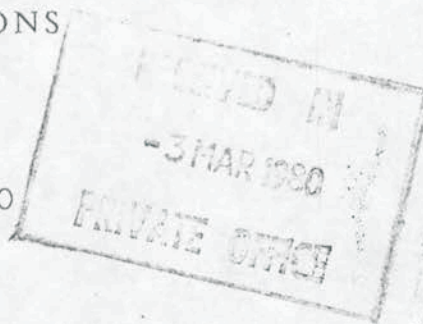
From Sir Bernard Braine, D.L., M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

29th February, 1980

The Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, MP,  
Secretary of State,  
Department of the Environment,  
2 Marsham Street,  
LONDON, SW1P 3EB



*My dear Michael —*

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 28th February addressed to Nicholas Bethell about the wording of the inscription on our proposed memorial to the victims of Yalta.

With respect I fear that the words you suggest would not be acceptable to us because they obscure what happened. Our memorial is dedicated not to the memory of the even larger number of Soviet citizens who were returned to their homeland after the war in accordance with the Yalta Agreement, but to those who were sent back forcibly against their will contrary to international law. Some of these preferred to kill themselves rather than to return. Our wording refers to the "innocent", i.e. it specifically excludes any persons guilty of war crimes, a point which is not picked up in your wording.

What is more those forced to return against their will included persons who were not Soviet citizens at all and who had surrendered willingly to us and to our allies believing that they would not be handed over to the Soviet authorities.

I want to make it plain that our Committee was not concerned with making any attack upon the Soviet Union which is clearly implied by your wording, nor those British individuals who were responsible for a monstrous crime which was deliberately concealed from Parliament at the time, but rather to show that once the truth was out Parliamentarians of all parties and others were determined to make atonement.

We are willing to negotiate a realistic and truthful inscription within the guidelines laid down in the Prime Minister's letter and I understood that this task was to be mandated to you and not to anyone else.

As a beginning, therefore, I would suggest that our proposed inscription stands, but with the deletion of the words "by Britain and her allies". This would leave an inscription which accords with the truth, is hardly controversial and omits any reference to Britain and allied governments. It seems to me to be within the Prime Minister's guidelines. For ease of reference I attach the revised wording.

I am sorry we will be unable to meet on Tuesday morning, but quite understand the reason. If you can agree with my suggestion then we need not have a meeting, otherwise I would be grateful if arrangements could be made for us to meet at your convenience as soon as possible.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Nicholas Bethell and John Jolliffe.

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THIS MEMORIAL WAS PLACED HERE BY MEMBERS OF  
PARLIAMENT, OF ALL PARTIES, AND OTHERS TO COMMEMORATE  
THE THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN  
FROM RUSSIA AND OTHER EAST EUROPEAN NATIONS  
DELIVERED AGAINST THEIR WILL, ~~BY BRITAIN AND HER ALLIES~~  
TO IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH AT THE HANDS OF COMMUNIST  
GOVERNMENTS BETWEEN 1943 AND 1947.





2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

29 February 1980

for  
P.N.B.

Dear Colin

MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF YALTA

Further to my earlier letter to you of today, I am now copying to you the comments which my Secretary of State has received from Lord Bethell on the inscription which, at your suggestion, we have proposed to him.

As I mentioned in my earlier letter, Lord Bethell has said that he and his colleagues will wish to discuss this question with Mr Heseltine, and this discussion is likely to take place on Wednesday 5 March. I would be grateful if you could provide advice on Lord Bethell's comments - and particularly on his submission that his suggested wording is not controversial and therefore falls within the Prime Minister's guidelines - by Tuesday 4 March.

I am copying this to Michael Alexander (No 10), and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely  
Paul Bristow

P N BRISTOW  
Private Secretary

Colin Munro Esq  
PS/Peter Blaker Esq MP



FROM  
NICHOLAS  
BETHELL

TELEPHONE  
01-402-6877

73 SUSSEX SQUARE  
LONDON W2 2SS

The Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, MP,  
Department of the Environment,  
LONDON S.W.1.

29th February 1980

*Dear Mr Heseltine,*

Memorial to the Victims of Yalta

Thank you for your letter of February 28th. Paul Bristow telephoned me this morning with an amendment to the suggested text for our inscription contained in your letter. I may as well place it on the record that your suggested text now reads:

This memorial was placed here by members of Parliament, of all parties, and others to commemorate the men, women and children from the Soviet Union and other East European nations, who were persecuted after their return to communist countries at the conclusion of the Second World War.

I indicated to Mr Bristow that I had spoken to Sir Bernard Braine and that we agreed that, while we fully accepted the guidelines laid down by the Prime Minister in her letter to me of 21st February, we could not agree with the text that you propose.

I should mention that I personally did my best to persuade the members of our steering committee, many of whom approached this subject with deep emotion, to keep the inscription simple and uncontroversial. Indeed, it could well be argued that the inscription as it stands falls within Margaret Thatcher's guidelines.

However, we have taken particular note of her decision that, if the memorial is to be erected on Crown land, the inscription must not contain any implicit or explicit criticism of previous British governments. We are therefore ready to remove the words "by Britain and her allies" from our suggested text.

But Sir Bernard and I feel that this is really about as far as we can reasonably go, bearing in mind the views of the committee and the facts

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The Rt.Hon. Michael Heseltine, MP.

29th February 1980

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of the matter. Perhaps it would help if I indicated why we feel inclined to insist on our text in the various places where it diverges from yours.

Firstly, the word "thousands" was included as a deliberate understatement of the truth. No one knows precisely how many people were delivered to the Soviet Union against their will, but it was probably several hundred thousand. We feel that the word "thousands" indicates, without exaggeration, the extent of the tragedy.

Secondly, we insist that the word "innocent" be included. Such criticism as has been levelled against our project is based on the idea that some of those forcibly repatriated committed atrocities during the Second World War and could be classified as war criminals. This may be true, although it applies only to a small number of those involved. Anyway, it is no part of our plan to honour the memory of war criminals or opportunists who joined Hitler's side for selfish reasons. The word "innocent" is essential if we are to maintain this position.

Thirdly, we believe that "Russia" is a more accurate statement of fact than "Soviet Union". One of the most important aspects of this affair is that a number of individuals forcibly repatriated were old emigres who had left Russia before the Soviet Union came into existence. They were sent East, contrary to the Yalta agreement, even though they were not Soviet citizens. We would wish to include them under the category "from Russia".

Fifthly, there is the significant toning down of your description of what happened to those who were sent East. We wish to inscribe that they were "delivered against their will to imprisonment and death at the hands of communist governments". You suggest that we should inscribe that they were "persecuted after they returned to communist countries".

We have no wish to over-emotionalise our inscription. We appreciate that people will read it, will draw their own conclusions from it and make their own individual comments about it. But we feel that to inscribe

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The Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, MP.

29th February 1980

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simply that the victims of forcible repatriation were "persecuted" is to carry understatement to the point of absurdity.

This is an area where the facts are simply not in dispute. Everyone but the most die-hard Soviet apologist will nowadays admit the truth about Stalin's labour camps and the millions of innocent people who perished in them. We feel that our suggested wording represents the truth, pure and unvarnished. It is not controversial. And it therefore falls within the Prime Minister's guidelines.

We therefore hope very much that you will find it possible to accept our suggested wording, with the one amendment conceded in my fourth paragraph above.

*Yours sincerely*

*Nicholas Beckett*

Inscription Proposed by Yalta Victims Memorial Appeal Steering Committee

This memorial was placed here by members of Parliament, of all parties, and others to commemorate the thousands of innocent men, women and children from Russia and other East European nations delivered against their will by Britain and her allies to imprisonment and death at the hands of communist governments between 1944 and 1947.

Inscription Proposed by Michael Heseltine

This memorial was placed here by members of Parliament, of all parties, and others to commemorate the men, women and children from the Soviet Union and other East European nations, who were persecuted after their return to communist countries at the conclusion of the Second World War.

29 FEB 1980





2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

*For  
Munro*

29 FEB 1980

*Dear Colin*

/ You will wish to see the enclosed copy of a letter I have today sent to Lord Bethell.

You should know that, in giving his initial reaction over the 'phone, Lord Bethell said that he thought it unlikely that the wording in my letter to him would prove acceptable to his colleagues and himself. He undertook to put their comments in writing, but added that he thought that a discussion with Mr Heseltine would be necessary at an early date. We shall of course look to you for further advice on the line to take over the inscription.

I am copying this letter, together with my Secretary of State's letter of 28 February, to Michael Alexander (No 10) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely*

*Paul Bristow*

P N BRISTOW  
Private Secretary

Colin Munro Esq