



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

3 April 1980

Dear Nicholas,

I have seen the correspondence which has ensued since I wrote to you on 21 February about the proposal to erect a memorial on Crown Land to those who were repatriated to the Soviet Union at the end of the last war. I am sorry that it has proved so difficult to reach agreement on the inscription for the memorial.

You will recall that I said in my letter that the memorial could be erected on Crown Land provided the inscription on the memorial was uncontroversial and, in particular, avoided imputing guilt to previous British Governments. I am bound to say that some of the wording which has been proposed to Michael Heseltine by the Steering Committee seems to me both to be controversial and to impute guilt.

My own attitude towards the memorial has always been based on the assumption that we were trying to commemorate those who had died, not to convict those who could no longer answer for the decisions for which they were responsible. In my view, the inscription proposed by Michael Heseltine at his meeting with you on 17 March meets this objective. It was as follows:-

"This

"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 Eastern European nations, who were imprisoned and died at the hands of Communist Governments after their repatriation at the conclusion of the Second World War."

I am aware that you have criticised this form of words on the ground that some of those returned to the Soviet Union were not Soviet citizens and that the reference to 'repatriation' is therefore inappropriate. But the same objection applies to the other formulations that I have seen on this point, for example those which refer to the return of the victims to their homelands.

I do not think that in a brief inscription we can hope to embrace everything. The Government have already come a long way towards your position, and I personally have tried to be helpful in this process. I hope you will now see whether you cannot come the rest of the way to meet my point and to accept the inscription set out above.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

The Lord Bethell.

Home Affairs

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JS



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 April 1980

Yalta Victims Memorial

Further to my letter to you of 11 April on this subject, I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Lord Bethell informing the Prime Minister that the Yalta Victims Memorial steering committee have approved the wording in the Prime Minister's letter of 3 April.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to Paul Lever and Colin Munro (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Paul Bristow, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

KRB



FROM
NICHOLAS
BETHELL

TELEPHONE
01-402-6877

73 SUSSEX SQUARE
LONDON W2 2SS

The Rt. Hon. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, MP,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON S.W.1.

28th April 1980

12914

Dear Margaret,

Yalta Victims Memorial

This is just to let you know that I sent your letter of 3rd April to the members of our steering committee and, I am glad to say, they have approved the wording that you proposed to them.

We are now ready to move ahead with the construction of the memorial by our sculptress Miss Angela Conner. On Wednesday, May 7th, we will be holding a press conference in the Grand Committee Room and showing a short documentary film from US archives, which portrays an actual event when Russian prisoners were forcibly repatriated from a camp near Munich in 1946.

We shall simultaneously be launching another appeal for funds. All being well, we would then unveil the memorial in late October or early November of this year.

I will keep you informed of the progress that we make. Once again I would like to thank you for the added effectiveness that you have given our enterprise by permitting the memorial to stand on Crown land.

Yours ever

Nicholas

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Home Affairs

11 April 1980

"Yalta Victims Memorial"

Enclosed with my letter to you of 3 April was the text of a letter which the Prime Minister had sent to Lord Bethell about the Yalta Victims Memorial. I now enclose a copy of a reply received by the Prime Minister from Lord Bethell. It remains to be seen whether Lord Bethell will succeed in persuading the other members of the steering committee to accept the proposed inscription.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to Paul Lever and Colin Munro (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O. D. B. ALEXANDER

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P N Bristow, Esq
Department of the Environment



10 DOWNING STREET

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MODBA (ae)

PM has not seen yet

ms

9/4

cc Ian Gow,
FCO
CO
EW.



FROM
NICHOLAS
BETHELL

TELEPHONE
01-402-6877

73 SUSSEX SQUARE
LONDON W2 2SS

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street

April 6th
1980

Rg.

P.A. has seen

fg. Prints 04

Dear Margaret,

I make haste to reply to your letter of April 3rd about our Yalta victims' memorial before leaving for a few days' holiday.

I am very conscious of the fact that, were it not for your personal interest in our enterprise, we would probably never have been allowed to place our memorial on the site in question under any circumstances at all. I would like you to know how deeply grateful I am that you were able to find time amid all your other problems to consider this matter.

As you point out, we are never going to devise an inscription that will embrace everything and satisfy everybody. I would have preferred

myself - and Bernard Braine has been pressing this more strongly still - to "spell out" the truth of the matter by indicating that the innocent victims were returned against their will.

But, now that you have clearly expressed your view about the various wordings that we have discussed, I am happy to accept what you say and I have written to the other two "negotiators" advising them to accept your proposed inscription. I very much hope that they will feel as I do. In any case, I will let you know.

Once again I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your very valuable advice and support.

Yours ever

Nicholas



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

3 April 1980

Dear Paul,

"Yalta Victims Memorial"

You wrote to me on 31 March about the impasse which had been reached in discussions between the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Yalta Victims Memorial Appeal Steering Committee.

The Prime Minister has seen your letter and some of the previous correspondence. As a result, she has written to Lord Bethell. I enclose the text of her letter. We can take a view of the next steps once we have received Lord Bethell's reply.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosure to Paul Lever (FCO) and Colin Munro (FCO) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely

Michael Alexander

P. N. Bristow, Esq.,
Department of the Environment.

RJA

Michael Alexander, Ctg
10 Downing Street,

Telephone
01-212 8001

DEPARTMENT OF THE
ENVIRONMENT
2 MARSHAM STREET
SW1P 3EB



Wespondre.

I now attach
a copy of Lord Bethell's letter of
1 April

With the Compliments of the

Private Secretary to the Secretary of

to Mr. Hadfield, State for the Environment

Paul Bowler
2 April '80.



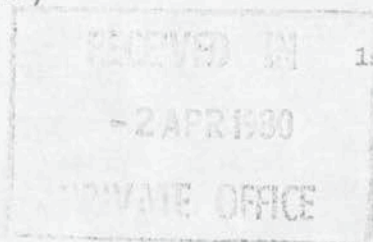
FROM

NICHOLAS
BETHELL

TELEPHONE
01-402-6877

73 SUSSEX SQUARE
LONDON W2 2SS

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



Dear Mr Heseltine,

It was good to see you again, although briefly, at Hendon Town Hall last Friday. I much admired the vigour of your address to us, especially since it was at the end of a long day, and your inspired auctioneering.

It is now more than two weeks since our inconclusive meeting to discuss the inscription on the Yalta victims' memorial and, it seems, no one is yet able to assure us when or even whether this matter will be satisfactorily resolved.

Bernard Braine and I are now under increasing pressure from members of our steering committee to bring this matter to a solution, either by agreeing a wording or by deciding to seek another site. Our secretary is also receiving letters of enquiry from the large number of people who contributed to our appeal. They are asking us to explain publicly the reasons for this long delay.

You will appreciate that ever since 1974 the Foreign Office has rejected the entire thesis of my argument on this historical issue. It was therefore to be expected that they would oppose our project. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, has always encouraged us. In her letter to me of February 21st she wrote that she had asked you to discuss the proposed inscription with me and that she was confident that it would prove possible to agree on a wording with which everyone was content.

I feel sure that she did not envisage that more than five weeks would elapse without the matter showing any sign of being resolved.

It also seems to me that the Foreign Office, even though their interest as a department lies in the collapse of our project and even though their recommendations in the matter have been substantially rejected, are once again taking the lead in this discussion over the wording.

It had been my understanding that you were mandated by the Prime Minister to negotiate the wording on your own and it was quite a shock at our

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The Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine.

1st April 1980

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meeting when it emerged that this was not the case.

I beg you, therefore, to assert your authority over this matter and, in order to avoid a clash, to resolve it now along the common sense lines proposed at our meeting, which involved concessions by both sides.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Beckett

c.c. Ian Gow
Sir Bernard Braine

2- APR 1960

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