‘Loyal believers and disloyal sceptics’: propaganda and dissent in Britain during the Korean War, 1950-53

On 10 December 1951 the Labour MP Richard Crossman went to see Benjamin Britten’s new opera Billy Budd, which had just opened at Covent Garden. It was, he noted in his diary,

> oddly topical…Billy Budd is really pure, brave and loyal, but it is the war against the French Revolution, and he comes on board shouting “Rights of Man”! …moreover he is deeply moved by the merciless treatment of the lower deck by the upper deck. Benjamin Britten is a Socialist, and I am not sure this isn’t all about loyalty and the Cold War[1].

Crossman’s comment was apposite for, as the Cold War intensified in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the loyalties of British diplomats, journalists, politicians, trade unionists and scientists were being questioned as never before. The unmasking of the ‘atom spies’ Alan Nunn May and Klaus Fuchs was followed by the defection of Bruno Pontecorvo, a naturalised British scientist, to the Soviet Union in August 1950. Even more perplexing was the defection of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean in May 1951, although the fiction that the fate of the ‘missing diplomats’ was unknown was maintained for some time. The vetting and purging of civil servants had already been introduced in 1948, in response to fears that Communists’ ‘divided loyalty…might in certain contingencies become active disloyalty’[2]. Such concerns extended far beyond the civil service. The Labour Party General Secretary Morgan Phillips kept a file on the so-called ‘Lost Sheep’ (Labour MPs who were secret members of the Communist Party), and George Orwell’s listing of alleged crypto-Communists and fellow travellers, for the benefit of the Foreign Office’s Information Research Department (IRD), suggested that British public life was riddled with political and personal corruption. Crossman himself, in his foreword to The God that Failed, an influential collection of essays by former Communists, presented the Cold War as a quasi-religious struggle for the ‘souls’ of intellectuals[3]. As Anne Deighton has recently written, the Cold War was conceived as ‘a war of ideas, of loyalty to beliefs’[4].

The outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950, which marked the beginning of the 'perilously high Cold War'[5], provided the sharpest test of loyalties yet. The fact that this was an undeclared war (or 'police action'[6]) fought under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council, in no way diminished the demands that the British state made on British subjects. Many of the troops sent to Korea were on national service (a period swiftly extended from eighteen months to two years), or reservists recalled unexpectedly – and often with extreme reluctance - to the colours[7]. But in a war defined by ideology and sanctioned by an international organisation where did the boundary lie between legitimate dissent and assisting the enemy? This was the dilemma faced by Tom Hopkinson, editor of Picture Post, who was sacked by his proprietor for attempting to publish a story about alleged South Korean mistreatment of political prisoners. While Hopkinson had every confidence in his reporters, the seasoned journalist James Cameron and photographer Bert Hardy, he later acknowledged that in the 'climate of that time' he may well have been seen as undermining '"our side"', and even as purveying '"Communist propaganda"'[8]. The Korean War not only placed constraints on conventional journalism, but also posed the question of how far a democratic state could and should limit the freedom of ordinary citizens to travel, report, and express opinions. This article focuses on the handful of individuals who, by travelling to China and North Korea, took 'legitimate action to obtain first-hand information'[9], and thereby influence public opinion within Britain. As a result their loyalty was questioned, and all would incur penalties of some form. The purpose is not so much to test the validity of their claims, but rather to analyse their motivations and assess their effectiveness.

It was not initially apparent that the Korean War would prove so divisive. The UN military operation (within which Britain acted as junior partner to the United States) was mounted in response to apparently flagrant aggression by North Korea against the South. Although opinion polls suggest that the British public's initial support for the war soon waned[10], the Labour government enjoyed the backing of all of the major political parties (apart from the Communist Party), as well as the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the United Nations Association (UNA), in condemning the North

Korean invasion. Prime Minister Clement Attlee's decision to support military action was welcomed by the Labour-supporting Daily Herald as reflecting the 'feelings of the average man and woman'[11]. The point was often made that, unlike during the crises of the 1930s, collective security must be upheld by force – a point made explicit in a UNA pamphlet entitled Korea must not be another Manchuria! The fact that British soldiers were once again on active service merely intensified the sombre patriotism of the moment, as did the eventual presence of almost 1000 British Prisoners of War (POWs) in Chinese-run camps along the border with Korea. When London councillor Bob Darke quit the Communist Party in 1951 he wrote that - while he still thought that the war was wrong – the important point was that 'British lives are being lost'. It was 'utter rubbish', he added, to say that Attlee was a warmonger[12].

The politics of the Korean War were not, however, quite so straightforward. After all, one of the first American actions during the crisis had been to guarantee the security of the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek on the island of Formosa (Taiwan), thereby forestalling a Chinese Communist invasion. Accordingly, the defence of South Korea was tied to the survival of the defeated and (for many in Britain) discredited Chinese leader[13]. Moreover, as soon as the North Korean offensive had been repelled by the American landings at Inchon on 15 September 1950, a new question was immediately posed: was this a war to repel North Korean aggression, or to unify the entire peninsula under non-Communist rule? When General Douglas MacArthur sent UN forces across the 38th parallel and towards the Chinese border (still supported by mainstream Labour Party opinion[14]) he triggered intervention by Chinese 'volunteers' and suffered a humiliating defeat. Concern over the direction and handling of the war increased markedly after this military debacle. As Tom Driberg, the left-wing Labour MP and journalist, wrote in December 1950: '…we must do our utmost to avoid being dragged into a new total war by the Americans in the present mood of too many of them'[15]. Others feared that Britain's close support for the United States over Korea might even lead to the breakup of the Labour Party and the Commonwealth[16]. Indeed, the British government's decision to support the United States in branding the People's Republic of China as an aggressor at the UN

came close to splitting the cabinet in January 1951[17]. British fears were assuaged by Attlee's dramatic visit to President Truman in December 1950, and even more so by Truman's sacking of MacArthur, who was deeply unpopular in Britain, in April 1951. Thereafter, political enthusiasm for what was becoming a costly war of attrition declined rapidly, although British troops remained in Korea until the Armistice of 27 July 1953. As the war played itself out, few British observers doubted that it would end with the renewed partition of Korea and the enhanced international standing of Communist China. Richard Crossman confided in his diary in February 1952, after drinks with the fiercely anti-Communist American publisher Henry Luce, that: 'we ought to be frank with the Americans and tell them honestly that we are appeasers in the Far East, that we assume Communism has come to stay…'[18]

The fast-changing nature of the war during its opening months produced two distinct and opposing positions on the British left. The Communist Party – supported by the Britain-China Friendship Association (BCFA), a Communist 'front' organisation established in 1949 – opposed the war outright. For Communists, this was a counter-revolutionary war of US aggression, started by a South Korean attack against the North[19]. Conversely, the Peace with China Council (PWCC**) -** a movement of the non-Communist left set up after the Chinese military intervention - accepted the need to defeat North Korean aggression, but did not wish to see a wider war with China[20]. This division meant that some of the bitterest debates about the Korean War took place within the left itself. For instance, Peace with China proudly claimed that it had 'nothing to do with the Communist Party. On the contrary, it has taken away the inverted commas from the word "Peace"'[21]. Kingsley Martin (editor of the New Statesman) strongly resisted attempts by the Communists to muscle in on Peace with China just at the point when – as he saw it - it was gaining a presence in 'nearly all the universities of England'. He 'was trying to do something', he explained in an intercepted telephone call, and 'he did not want it ruined' by any link to the Communists and their associates[22].

The Korean War, therefore, deepened the isolation of the Communist Party and, at its height, leading Communists believed that their party might have to go

underground in what one activist referred to as the 'treason uproar'[23]. Indeed, it is clear from the diaries of Guy Liddell (Deputy Director General of MI5) that the banning of the Communist Party was under active discussion in June 1950, even prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, although no action was taken for fear of 'bad publicity' [24]. However, it soon became apparent that the charge of 'treason', which was still formally a capital offence and which was made so effortlessly by the right-wing press and Conservative MPs during the Korean War, was of little practical assistance to the British government in controlling dissent. In the spring of 1951 Monica Felton, a member of the Labour Party and chairman of the Stevenage new town development corporation, took part in a delegation to North Korea organised by the Women's International Democratic Federation. On her return she alleged - initially by means of a radio broadcast from Moscow, then in a press conference, in speeches and in print – that UN forces had committed atrocities, both by bombing North Korean cities and by presiding over massacres of civilians. Her comments caused outrage, and her activities were investigated by the Attorney General Frank Soskice. In a Cabinet memorandum of 19 June 1951 he noted that there was a 'growing and natural public disquiet at the series of incidents such as Pontecorvo, the diplomats and now Mrs Felton, and no doubt constant further incidents of this kind'. If he did not prosecute her, he mused, 'others may take this as carte blanche for them to visit North Korea as much as they like…to consort with those who are doing their best to kill British soldiers'[25]. A week later, however, after advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), he told Parliament that there was insufficient evidence to initiate criminal proceedings against her. Behind the scenes, civil servants conceded that 'not only Communists, but a vocal section of Government supporters do not think Mrs Felton has done anything morally wrong'. Soskice had to conclude that there was 'no power at the moment to prevent a British subject from going to Korea', although a number of avenues were subsequently explored, including a draft Subversive Activities Bill, restrictions on travel to Communist countries, and even – at the suggestion of Sir Percy Sillitoe, head of MI5 – the revival of the draconian wartime Defence Regulation 18D[26].

Instead of facing a treason charge, Felton was sacked from her post at Stevenage on her return to Britain by Hugh Dalton, Minister of Local Government, ostensibly because she had neglected her duties and failed to return in time to serve as a witness at the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee. According to Dalton's diary he took the decision strictly on 'departmental' grounds – 'This puts the civil liberties issues outside my field. I mentioned to C.R.A[ttlee] who says I have full authority to dismiss her'. However, he also noted that he was under 'irresistible pressure' because, if he had not sacked her 'I should have had a flood of resignations at Stevenage [Corporation]'[27]. Felton's case established a pattern, whereby critics of the war whose actions may be construed as comforting the enemy would not be charged with a criminal offence, but could expect other forms of action to be taken against them. Even simple criticism of government policy could be punished. For instance, Sir John Pratt, a retired Foreign Office 'old China hand' who challenged the official account of how the Korean War had started, was sacked as the Foreign Secretary's nominee to sit on the Universities China Committee in July 1951. Although Pratt was formally dismissed on the grounds of age and the long time that he had spent away from China, there was no question that this represented a response to his outspoken and politically embarrassing views[28]. Pratt himself privately conceded that his position had become untenable as he was 'going about the country attacking [the Foreign Secretary] in public'[29].

The remainder of this article will discuss those British individuals who placed themselves, like Felton, in a position of public and official odium during the Korean War. The best known cases were those of Alan Winnington and Michael Shapiro, British Communists based in Beijing who covered the Korean War for the Daily Worker; Wilfred Burchett, an Australian journalist travelling on a British passport who worked closely with Winnington; Jack Gaster, a Communist lawyer, who visited Korea as part of a delegation from the International Association of Democratic Lawyers; the 'Red' Dean of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, a notorious fellow-traveller who visited China with his wife Nowell and, like Gaster, brought back allegations of American 'germ warfare'; and Joseph Needham, President of the BCFA, who became

de facto leader of the International Scientific Commission (ISC) established by the World Peace Council to investigate the 'germ warfare' claims[30]. Winnington, Shapiro, Burchett, Gaster and Felton all aroused particular animosity for having visited British POWs during the war. However, they were by no means all Communists following the party line, and some, it should be noted, had reputations to protect. For instance Gaster, fearful of a charge of 'professional misconduct', became agitated when the draft of his pamphlet Korea…I saw the truth emphasised his credentials as a lawyer[31]. In August 1950 Needham refused an offer to become a Vice–President of the British Peace Campaign on the grounds that it was insufficiently neutral in the Cold War, and that his ability to intervene in public controversies over Asian affairs would 'carry less weight' if he had such a prominent association[32]. Monica Felton was a long-standing member of the Labour Party, who had been an elected Labour member of the London County Council between 1937 and 1946. After the war she was appointed to run Peterlee new town, before moving to Stevenage in 1949 on a salary of £1500[33]. To understand why people with much to lose should court the suspicion of – and penalties associated with – alleged disloyalty it is important to outline four factors which form the political context for their actions.

The first point concerns the significance of the Chinese Revolution. Little was known about Korea in Britain, and for many, therefore, the Korean War was viewed through the prism of Britain's relations with revolutionary China. China had gained a sudden prominence in Britain during 1949 as a result of the Communist victory in the civil war, the formation of the People's Republic on 1st October, and its recognition by the British government in January 1950. Despite the 'Amethyst incident' incident earlier in 1949, when a British frigate on the Yangtze River was fired on and briefly detained by Communist forces, the formation of the PRC had been warmly welcomed by many in Britain as representing a fresh start for China after decades of chronic political disunity, famine, and a devastating war with Japan. In October 1950 a delegation from the PRC toured Britain, just as Chinese 'volunteers' were preparing to confront UN forces in Korea. Although the tour was organised by the BCFA, and caused offence by largely ignoring the Labour Party, an extract from the official report gives a flavour of the breadth and enthusiasm of the reception:

> In Nottingham arrangements were in the hands jointly of university professors and lecturers, and the Nottingham Co-operative Society. They were entertained by the Mayor and Sherriff and at the reception a toast was proposed to Chairman Mao Tse-tung by the Vice-Chancellor of the University. It was here that they went down a coal-mine, spoke to the miners and also visited the University. The visit to Nottingham ended with a big public meeting and a presentation to the President of the Nottingham Co-operative Society of a bound volume of the History of the Chinese Co-operative movement[34].

The goodwill generated by the formation of the PRC was undoubtedly diminished by allegations of Chinese 'fanaticism' and cruelty towards prisoners in Korea, but the widespread desire to remain on good terms with the 'New China' survived. As far as both Needham and Hewlett Johnson were concerned, for instance, the fact that 'germ warfare' allegations emanated from Chinese sources indicated their veracity. Even before he joined the scientific commission Needham told a public meeting that the allegations had been published by 'first-rate Chinese bacteriologists – men I personally know'[35]. Privately, he wrote that the 'racial-prejudice factor in the brushing aside and ridiculing of the Chinese scientists…was one of the reasons why I had to go'[36]. Johnson told the press on his return that he brought with him an appeal signed on behalf of 'many millions of Chinese Christians…Can we doubt the integrity of our Eastern Christian brethren? … No longer can [British] Christians… reject the germ [warfare] stories as propaganda'[37].

A second point concerns the nature of Britain's relationship with the USA. In February 1951 a Foreign Office official was given the thankless task of bringing Sir John Pratt – author of the pamphlet Korea: the lie that led to war - to heel. In a revealing comment, a fellow official wrote that Pratt **'**sees everything in relation to China and ignores the overall picture which is that *we are allied to America and at war with communism*'[38]. Pratt was hardly unaware of this 'overall picture', and believed that the USA was gravely weakened by its support for discredited 'racketeers' such as Chiang Kai-shek and South Korea's president Syngman Rhee. The new Chinese government was, in his view, everything that the old Nationalist regime

was not: 'honest, purposeful and disciplined'. The new rulers 'are supposed to be Communists, but they employ no secret police, make no attempt at thought control, and do not resort to political assassination'[39]. However, it is also clear that Pratt was motivated by ambivalence towards America's new global power, and resented the manner in which the decline of British influence in the Far East had made way for what he saw as brutal US intervention. In a speech of 11 June 1951 he spoke of how **'**cringing to America [over Korea] has dragged us down to the depths of humiliation and dishonour'[40]. Pratt's views were hardly unique: a former British consul wrote to offer him support in his work 'for Peace and liberation from lunatic USA overlordship'[41]. The poet Edmund Blunden, recently returned from Japan, also wrote to thank Pratt for his stand against the United States' 'brainless drift' towards war. The Americans must not be allowed to think, he continued, that 'we just take them as chieftains and even if in disagreement must simper our obedience'[42]. Indeed, hostile attitudes to Britain's American allies were commonplace at the time. Joseph Needham defended Chinese 'humanism' against what he saw as debased and immature American culture: 'the people of this country have seen enough of "gangster films" and "comics" to know by now what North American culture regards as normal'[43]. A News Chronicle war correspondent in Korea told Driberg privately in the winter of 1950 that 'our chaps are bitter and contemptuous of the Yanks now…there's nothing quite as timid as these Walter Mitty soldiers'[44]. Alleged atrocities were generally attributed to American and South Korean troops, rather than British, and the comment by the leading Communist Ivor Montagu that '[e]very British soldier is engaged in criminal acts in the war in Korea' was very much the exception[45]. British soldiers in Korea (and, even more so, POWs) were far more commonly presented by critics of the war as victims of American policy rather than as criminals. Anti-Americanism was reinforced by the belief that – after the atom bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki - the United States would readily condone the use of extreme violence against Asian populations. Indeed, one of the reasons why the 'germ warfare' allegations gained such a receptive audience in Britain was that US forces were known to be using napalm. As the journalist Reginald Thompson told a conference in London: 'You just went and deluged people with this stuff [napalm]'. The enemy were '"gooks"', he went on, 'they were not really people'[46].

Emrys Hughes, a Labour MP who visited China in 1952, commented apropos the putative use of bacteriological warfare that 'there is surely something completely un-British in these new and horrible methods of warfare'[47].

Thirdly, to what extent did the sponsorship of the UN make this a different kind of war? For instance, Tom Driberg conceded that a force 'fighting under the UN for the rule of law, ought to have evidently higher standards than its antagonists'[48]. The fact that the PRC had not been allowed to take China's seat at the UN, and that the Soviet Union had been boycotting the UN Security Council on this very issue when the decision to intervene in Korea was taken, inevitably reduced the prospect of consensus over the war in Britain. Attlee's comment that the North Korean invasion formed part of a 'world-wide conspiracy against the way of life of the free democracies'[49] merely reinforced the left's belief that the UN was serving 'western' interests in Korea. The role of the UN, therefore, was itself hotly contested, and some critics attempted to lay claim to its authority for their own cause. At a rally on 14 September 1952 at Empress Hall, London, where the Dean of Canterbury presented allegations of American 'germ warfare', Special Branch reported that a 'stand of flags of the United Nations' adorned the platform, and that the 'United Nations Song' (as well as two verses of the National Anthem), were sung[50]. In March 1951 at a meeting of the Hemel Hempstead Branch of the UNA, where the branch officers were members of the Communist Party, the speakers were allowed to 'slander' the USA and advise Class Z reservists to ignore the call-up for service in Korea[51]. When Joseph Needham was reprimanded for using his title as Honorary Vice-President of the Eastern Region of the UNA during the 'germ warfare' controversy, he claimed to speak on behalf of those who were still loyal to the ideal of the United Nations, but believed that the UN's current policies would result in a Third World War[52]. It could also be argued that for some the Korean War represented the death knell for the optimism of 1945, epitomised in both the Labour election victory and the formation of the UN. This point was made explicitly by Monica Felton: 'In 1945 Stevenage had been a part of our hope for a new and better kind of world. Most of these hopes had already faded and now the fate of Stevenage depended, I was sure, on the fate of the world'[53]. The 'New Jerusalem' had ended –

according to one of Felton's colleagues in the National Assembly of Women – in 'the most shameful war in history…The British people were overwhelmed with a sense of guilt about the war and the unnecessary destruction of life'[54].

A final contextual point relates to what the journalist Kingsley Martin referred to as 'the propaganda war in which we live', which 'divides us perforce into loyal believers and disloyal sceptics…'[55] The Korean War was inextricably bound up with the propaganda machines which had been set up during the opening phase of the Cold War such as the Foreign Office IRD, established in 1948[56], or the Soviet-sponsored World Peace Congress which emerged from a series of international congresses in the later 1940s. The situation was already so tense that the Sheffield Peace Congress of November 1950 was effectively banned when the British government refused many visa applications, not least for fear that it would offer a platform for critics of Britain's actions in Korea[57]. This polarisation intensified during the Korean War, when the British government felt that it was being subjected to wave after wave of hostile propaganda, generated by the world Communist movement and taken up by agents – witting or unwitting – within Britain[58]. Accordingly, both sides claimed to present a 'true' picture of events in Korea. Monica Felton stated that she had been sacked because 'I have found out the truth…A whole people are being destroyed with a calculated savagery that can only be compared to that of Hitler and the Gestapo against the Jews'[59]. Critics of the war sought to establish that every aspect of the official narrative – from the reason for the outbreak of the conflict, to the manner in which it was conducted, and the failure to end it - was based on lies. Conversely, supporters of the government worked to rebut these claims, often with the covert support of the Foreign Office in providing information and even drafting letters[60]. Despite their efforts, however, there was still considerable public interest in what the critics had to say. More than eighty Labour MPs gathered at Westminster to hear Felton speak after her dismissal, and 4000 people paid to hear the Dean of Canterbury on his return from China. The BCFA organised an extensive lecture tour for Needham, who claimed that audiences were as much as '90% sympathetic'[61]. Many of these individuals commanded attention due to their stature. Monica Felton was highly educated, and a lifelong Labour loyalist with no known connection to

Communism[62]. Sir John Pratt may have been – in the words of the head of the Foreign Office – 'approaching senility', but one official privately 'begged him to remember that he was very well-known in this country, as a leading authority on the Far East, and with a long connection with the Foreign Office'[63]**.** Joseph Needham was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and his decision to join the ISC caused alarm in the Foreign Office. One official warned of the 'risk (which I think is quite a serious one) that some scientifically plausible evidence [of bacteriological warfare] has been concocted for the benefit of Dr Needham'[64]. Even Hewlett Johnson – often regarded as a figure of fun – enjoyed a surprising degree of credibility, and his remarkable self-belief made him invulnerable to what the Communist intellectual Rajani Palme Dutt called the 'slings and arrows of the official goliath'[65].

The 'Red Dean' survived calls for his dismissal – or even indictment - in the House of Lords in July 1952[66], but was subjected to ridicule in the press. As Brian Porter has written, his claims of 'germ warfare' were met with humour rather than horror. The Sunday Express dubbed him the 'aged cockatoo of Communism', and the non-Communist left did not stint in its criticism: he was presented in the New Statesman as an absurd, credulous figure, while the Daily Herald found **'**not a germ of truth' in his allegations[67]. Even so, the power of public ridicule had its limits. Johnson received many messages of support and his pamphlet I Appeal swiftly sold out. Indeed, the rough treatment that he received only appeared to enhance the affection in which he was held. In August four railwaymen from Liverpool wrote asking for ten minutes of the Dean's time during their holiday so that they could thank their 'true friend' for his 'fight for world peace'[68]. By means of somewhat perverse logic, he even turned the mockery into a triumph. In August 1952 he told Harry Pollitt, General Secretary of the Communist Party, that he and his wife were 'frankly pleased at the whole mass of abuse. It has helped to assure us that we [the British people] can never tolerate in ourselves and others the use of germ warfare without being branded as national hypocrites. The wider the abuse therefore the better in the long run'. Surveillance reports indicated that the Communist Party – while finding the Dean embarrassing and difficult to control - was pleased with his campaign: he had put the

'germ warfare' allegations on the front pages, and was 'getting these subjects talked about in a very much wider field than was ever hoped for before' [69].

This comment suggests that these heated, ad hominem exchanges were, in fact, what passed for national debate in Britain at a time when the two main parties were in agreement about the war, but not wholly in tune with the national mood. The critics' allegations spoke – albeit in exaggerated form - to genuine concerns about the nature of the conflict, and above all concerns about Britain's new relationship with the United States. It could be argued, therefore, that critics of the war were publicising important truths about its brutality and destructiveness which were ignored or concealed at the time, and which have – at least in certain cases - been vindicated since[70]. Many made this point at the time. S.O. Davies, one of the few Labour MPs to oppose the war openly, claimed in 1952 that there had been a 'conspiracy to suppress the truth' in Parliament[71]. Wilfred d'Eye, a close associate of the Dean of Canterbury, wrote that the imposition of full military censorship in December 1950 was accompanied by 'unofficial censorship by the owners of our great newspapers and journals'[72]. Victor Purcell, an expert on the Far East and no fellow-traveller, agreed with Sir John Pratt that the truth over the war was 'deliberately suppressed by the press generally in Britain'. Many journalists, he noted, shared this view in private, but told him that '"we must stick with America"'[73]. Joseph Needham scribbled on one press release about the ISC that 'I think no paper published this!'[74] In this sense the 'disloyal sceptics' were, if anything, performing the role of a loyal opposition.

But this approach is overly simplistic, and the case of the POWs shows how critics of the war could also engage in far more questionable activities. The British prisoners in the Yalu river camps were subjected to a programme of political re-education by their Chinese captors, intended to separate them out into 'progressives' (collaborators) and 'reactionaries'. After the war British intelligence estimated that as many as a third of the POWs took part to some degree in Communist propaganda activities[75]. Not surprisingly, therefore, the visits by British left-wingers appeared to be more than the simple humanitarian and journalistic excursions that they claimed.

The two principal figures were Alan Winnington of the Daily Worker and the 'owlish and prematurely bald' Michael Shapiro, a former Communist councillor for Stepney who had been sent to join him[76]. Winnington had already gained notoriety for his allegations of American and South Korean atrocities in Korea, which were published as I saw the truth in Korea, and both he and his fellow journalist Wilfred Burchett were awarded the [North] Korean Order of the National Flag (but understandably did not wish this to be publicised)[77]. Winnington claimed that he had initially avoided visiting the camps for fear of the political and legal ramifications in Britain, but that he selflessly decided to do so when there was a danger that retribution might be taken against the British POWs. He spoke fondly of the British prisoners: compared to their narrow-minded Communist captors they were 'irrepressible and full of fun', and (unlike the 'pampered' US soldiers) they were sustained during captivity by working-class solidarity. However, his private correspondence reveals a different story - he exploited the prisoners for their propaganda potential, instructed the 'progressive' prisoners in how to offer political leadership within the camps, and encouraged them to 'call on the Daily Worker' on their return to Britain[78]. The evidence against Shapiro is even more troubling as it was claimed that he participated in interrogations of British prisoners in January 1951, and it was reported that he had threatened one Sgt. Kavanagh who subsequently died of neglect. Apparently Kavanagh had said that Shapiro was 'the poorest example of an Englishmen I have ever seen and if I could get my fingers round your scrawny neck I'd wring it': to which Shapiro replied that 'I'll have you shot'[79]. Jack Gaster, according to The Observer a **'**plausible, sleek man', also visited the camps and appears to have contributed to the prisoners' political 'education'. Analysis of the POWs' letters home caused considerable alarm in military circles: there was

> no doubt that Mr GASTER did a lot to impress the P[O]Ws with the authenticity of germ warfare. It is inconceivable how much damage a man like GASTER can do by roaming loose behind the Communist lines and talking to P[O]Ws as a free agent. I am certain that many waverers have been brought over to the Communist side by him[80]**.**

Any Britons who became implicated in the captivity of the British POWs would have known that they were playing with fire. Even so, the situation was a complex one. Given that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) was not in a position to help the POWs, or even to obtain information about them, it was not above taking advantage of intelligence – no matter how tainted the source. Gaster himself offered to give a report to the Secretary for War on his return from Korea, and the British military command in Japan hoped that 'full advantage' would be taken of his offer. Although Gaster's report on the camps would be 'flavoured due to his affiliation with communists…some value could be obtained'[81]. Moreover, when Monica Felton returned home bearing letters from prisoners there was no shortage of mothers and wives who were grateful for news of their loved ones. Maggie Owen expressed her gratitude to Felton: 'we are all chuffed' (or - as the Daily Worker explained – 'the Leeds equivalent of delighted')[82]. The letters were circulated to families alongside the suggestion that they join the Communist campaign for an end to the Korean War. While some relatives of POWs felt abused and manipulated, others spoke prominently and effectively at public meetings organised by the National Assembly of Women (NAW), of which Felton was President. At a meeting on 25 June 1952 one woman read out a letter from her son, a POW who had served with the Glosters: 'Mother, see what you can do to help bring about peace. The Yanks don't seem to care about getting us home'[83]. While historians have found little evidence for the long-term radicalisation of the British prisoners, there certainly were some political benefits for the British left. At an NAW rally in March 1954 Robert Cocks, a former POW and a Communist party member, went so far as to attribute 'the end of the war in Korea' to the association's efforts, and noted that 'the atrocities described by Mrs. Monica Felton…had not been exaggerated'. He went on to endorse the left's latest campaign by stating that 'Germany was a menace to the whole world and must not be allowed to re-arm'[84].

It should also be noted that even in captivity the prisoners retained some agency of their own. Tom Driberg went to Korea in the autumn of 1950 for Reynolds News, and was attached to 41 Independent Commando, a unit engaged in raiding the Korean coast. A number of these Marines were subsequently captured, including Andrew

Condron who gained notoriety as the only British prisoner to remain in China after the war[85]. Driberg and Condron corresponded during his captivity, and Driberg helped him on his return to Britain in 1962. Condron's letters from Korea flattered Driberg (noting his 'guts' in taking part in commando missions), praised his work in Parliament with regard to Malaya and Korea, and pushed him to do more within the Labour Party to end the war. One of his comments applied subtly teasing political pressure: 'By the way, what do you think of this ghastly germ-warfare business? Believe it?' In return, Driberg, while eliciting information on other imprisoned members of 41 Commando, sought to impress Condron. He pointed out that he had voted against the 1951 Japan Peace Treaty, and even bragged that he had given copies of the American journalist IF Stone's controversial book The Hidden History of the Korean War 'as prizes for [the] Labour League of Youth in my constituency'. Although Condron had emerged as one of the leading 'progressive' prisoners, his decision not to return home was unexpected and even somewhat unwelcome to his Chinese captors. Ironically, it was Monica Felton – who had met Condron in the camps – who wrote to Driberg about her anxiety 'to see that the right sort of pressure is brought to persuade him to change his mind'[86].

The threat of prosecution continued to haunt Winnington and Shapiro long after the Armistice. Before Jack Gaster visited Korea he had taken advice from a 'semi-friendly, semi-hostile QC in the Haldane Society', who warned that he would be committing an offence. Gaster subsequently concluded that the government would surely have taken legal action against him on his return to Britain 'if they felt the charge could stand up'. Even so, he warned Shapiro, who was still in China, that 'the risks of an attempt to put you on trial are serious, and, in the opinion of responsible people here, real…you will have to be patient'[87]. By now, both Shapiro and Winnington had entered a peculiar limbo. They were denied new passports in 1954, and forced to choose between exile and return to Britain to face the risk of prosecution. The confrontation was becoming ever more politicised. As early as September 1952 Winnington had written with gallows humour that should he return to Britain he 'would not cause a ripple…unless I can get into a treason trial', and that when it was necessary 'the party will demand our bodies'[88]. However, the

Communist Party may well have come to realise that the talk of legal action was hollow. When the MOD published a 'Blue Book' in February 1955 on the treatment of the prisoners of war the government proceeded with extravagant caution, even though part of the purpose was to 'expose the conduct of British Communists'. The draft was carefully checked and altered to make sure that allegations of misconduct by Shapiro, Winnington and others would not expose the government to defamation proceedings[89]. Winnington greeted the publication of the Blue Book with typical sang froid: '[I]t's a quaint thing. Nobody is named who was tortured but they had horrible things done to them it appears, like standing on the ice of the Yalu river with water poured over their feet and left to ponder for hours. I'll try to enclose a copy of the newsagency crap on this'[90].

The subsequent 'hollerings in Parliament for everyone's head ' (as Winnington put it[91]) did nothing to resolve the dilemma facing the two men. By 1956 Shapiro was tempted to 'take the risk and pay Britain a visit unless this is likely to involve the Party in trouble'[92], but was persuaded otherwise. In fact, he remained in China until his death in 1986. Winnington adapted less readily to life in Beijing, and found himself increasingly at odds with the Chinese Communists. In 1960 he moved to East Berlin, but by the mid-1960s a campaign was mounted to end his 'persecution' by the British authorities and allow him to return home. His case was taken up by Lord Longford and by the Berlin-based Observer journalist Neal Ascherson who conducted a lengthy interview with him. Initially the Foreign Office was not minded to allow Winnington to 'roam the world on a British passport while working against British interests'. But it relented when it discovered that the minister Antony Nutting had made a mistake when he alluded in Parliament in 1954 to Winnington's role in the 'interrogation' of British prisoners. Rather than allow this to come to light it was easier simply to return his passport. But with a Parthian shot Foreign Office officials noted in 1968 that, if necessary, they should remind the public of Winnington's **'**unpleasant activities…Let's not forget either the despicable part played by Burchett, Shapiro and Mrs Felton. There is no advantage in letting time heal these wounds'[93].

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Korea is an earth of bones
Blackened by devils of flame
That the lords of greed have conjured
In the British people's name
He who is British must fight them
Or his, too, is the blame
(Jack Lindsay, 'To Monica Felton',
Daily Worker, 19 June 1951)

Monica Felton proved a particularly valuable asset to the Communist Party during the Korean War. For here was a non-Communist public servant, martyred for apparently confirming what the party had been saying all along. Her lack of ideological commitment to Communism, as well as her graphic descriptions of human suffering at the hands of American bomber planes, made her witness far more compelling than that of party members such as Winnington, Gaster and Shapiro. J.R. Campbell (editor of the Daily Worker) compared Felton to Emily Hobhouse in the Boer War and 'all the fearless people in British history who have spoken the truth and damned the consequences'[94]. The poem cited above by Jack Lindsay, the Australian-born Communist writer, went on to contrast English elms, country lanes and village greens with ghastly images of violence against civilians in Korea. The implication was that the Communist Party's opposition to the war was not unpatriotic, but in tune with British radical traditions. However, even Felton's credentials were damaged by her attempts to mobilise the POWs' families, and by her receipt of a Stalin Peace Prize in December 1951 (Hewlett Johnson had been similarly honoured in 1949), which placed her firmly in the ranks of the fellow-travellers. Indeed, in 1953 she was denied entry to Canada due to her 'subversive associations'[95]. Her transition - from Labour loyalist to heroine of the Communist world peace movement, 'despicable' in the eyes of the British state - shows just how difficult it was for critics of official policy to maintain their integrity during the 'propaganda war' of the early 1950s. Felton found a more amenable reception in

India, where she eventually settled. When Paul Scott met her there in 1964 she asked if 'one day she might come home and not be made to feel like something crawling from under a stone'. On her death in 1970 Scott speculated 'how changed our response would be' if she were setting off now, 'not for Korea, but for Vietnam'[96].

Viewed from Korea at the time, these critics of the war were certainly proving effective. Alan Winnington wrote in July 1952 that 'Monica Felton is really doing things proud. What a transformation. And the old Dean is bashing 'em harder than ever. The bloody British bourgeoisie are in a tighter spot than they've ever known'[97]. Their actual impact is more difficult to assess, although the passing of a resolution against bacteriological warfare at the TUC Congress in September 1952 was surely a product of the fears aroused by that particular campaign. Moreover, the London District of the Communist Party claimed in 1953 that its campaigns – which included BCFA-sponsored meetings for Needham, Felton and Emrys Hughes – affected British opinion at crucial junctures in the last year of the war. As a backhanded compliment, it was noted that there was a 'serious slackening' in the party's 'fight for Peace' after the Korean armistice[98]. Perhaps the best that can be said is that the war's opponents successfully amplified the concerns of a British public which – when a swift victory proved impossible – distrusted American leadership, did not want the war to spread, and hoped that the conflict would end as soon as possible.

The propaganda war that swirled around Korea purported to deal in absolutes such as the truth, loyalty and disloyalty. In reality, there was little scope for serious debate or access to the factual evidence that could resolve competing claims. Neither side emerges with much credit. The easy option was to discredit one's opponent, and – for supporters of the war - agencies of the state were on hand to provide the ammunition. However, the very defensiveness of the British state exposed a weakness: its inability to prevent individuals (who were willing to risk the consequences) from causing embarrassment to Britain's war effort by claiming to speak on the basis of personal experience. These were neither spies nor traitors, and the state seemed to have no adequate riposte. The charge of treason was hopelessly

inappropriate: as the DPP wrote in 1955, the 'subversive activities of a number of British subjects' in Korea had 'aroused public indignation', but - even if China and North Korea were formally construed as 'enemies' – surely their actions did not 'merit death'![99] Likewise, there was much hand-wringing amongst government lawyers about the limitations of other possible offences: a charge of sedition, for instance, would require evidence that individuals were inciting violence. Meanwhile, the actual treason of the British double agent George Blake, who decided to work for the KGB during his captivity in Korea and later claimed that the American bombing of civilians had made him realise that he was 'on the wrong side', went damagingly undetected[100]. Even an accusation of disloyalty carried less weight than might have been expected, not least because these events took place at a formative stage in the Cold War, when discussions might still be coloured with a pre-lapsarian innocence. As Sir John Pratt told Cyril Connolly in September 1952, forcing the treachery of Burgess and Maclean into the mould of his own preconceptions, the 'missing diplomats' were 'young and emotional' and 'did this foolish thing' due to 'the tragedy of Korea and the behaviour of the Americans'[101]. Above all, as we have seen, the activities of the Korean War critics cannot be reduced to a simple narrative of disloyalty when so many different loyalties were on display: loyalty to an alternative vision of the UN, to a newly reborn China, and to a Britain that was not 'allied to America and at war with world Communism'.

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[1] University of Warwick Modern Records Centre (MRC), Mss 154/8/10.

[2] Christopher Andrew, The Defence of the Realm: The authorized history of MI5 (London, 2009), 382-5, citing the report of May 1947 by the Cabinet Committee on Subversive Activities; for vetting see Peter Hennessy, The Secret State: Preparing for the worst, 1945-2010 (Penguin, 2010), chap. 3, esp. 90-100.

[3] For the 'Lost sheep' see Darren Lilliker, Against the Cold War: The History and Political Traditions of Pro-Sovietism in the British Labour Party, 1945-1989 (London, 2004), esp. 86; for Orwell's lists see Peter Davison (ed.), The Complete Works of George Orwell, vol. 20, (London, 1998), 240-59. Arthur Koestler et al, The God that Failed: Six studies in Communism (London, 1950), 7-16.

[4] Anne Deighton, "Britain and the Cold War, 1945-1955", in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds, The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume 1; Origins, (CUP, 2010), 120.

[5] Hennessy, The Secret State, 29.
[6] This ill-advised term was used by President Truman, prompted by journalists, on 29 June 1950 (New York Times, 30 June 1950).
[7] Max Hastings, The Korean War (London, 1987), 92-3.
[8] See Tom Hopkinson, Of this our time: A journalist's story, 1905-50 (London, 1982), 282-7; James Cameron, Point of departure (London, 1967/2006), 145-8.
[9] Hull History Centre (HHC), National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) papers, UDCL/25/4, Elizabeth Allen (NCCL General Secretary) to Kingsley Martin, 22 June 1951.
[10] For a helpful collation of the wartime polls see Brian Porter, Britain and the rise of Communist China, (Oxford, 1967), 167-73.
[11] Daily Herald, 5 July 1950.
[12] Daily Herald, 17 May 1951.
[13]
[14] Tribune, 6 Oct. 1950; Alan Bullock, Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary, 1945-1951, (London, 1983) 813.
[15] Christ Church, Oxford, Tom Driberg papers, R4, 21 Dec. 1950, Driberg to Mr L.A. Butcher.
[16] See Kenneth Younger diary, 5 Aug. 1950 (I am grateful to Geoffrey Warner for allowing me to consult the diary); see also New Statesman 22 July 1950, and Tribune 1 Dec. and 15 Dec. 1950.
[17] Tom Buchanan, East Wind: China and the British Left, 1925-1976 (Oxford, 2012) 123-4.
[18] MRC, Mss 154/8/10, 4 Feb. 1952.
[19] Daily Worker, 28 June 1950; Noreen Branson, History of the CPGB, 1941-1951 (London, 1997), 215.
[20] For a fuller account see Buchanan, East Wind, 114-136.
[21] National Library of Wales (NLW), Aberystwyth, Lord Elwyn Jones papers, D7, Peace with China, March 1951, 1.
[22] The National Archives, Kew (TNA), KV 2/2093, surveillance report for 5 Dec. 1950.
[23] Malcolm MacEwen, The Greening of a Red (London, 1991), 170-71.
[24] TNA, KV 4/472, Liddell diary, entry for 9 June 1950. See also Phillip Deery, '"The secret battalion": Communism in Britain during the Cold War', Contemporary British History, 13/4, Winter 1999, 1-28.
[25] TNA, PREM 8/1525.
[26] TNA, HO 45/25583, file 865004/238, minutes of 20 June, 28 June 1951, and memorandum of 20 Sept. 1951.
[27] London School of Economics (LSE), Dalton papers, Dalton's manuscript diary, vol. 41, entries for 11 June and 15 June 1951.
[28] TNA, FO 924/931 and 924/932.
[29] School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, Sir John Pratt papers, PPMS 5/15, 4 Aug. 1951, Pratt to 'Tony'.
[30] Tom Buchanan, 'The courage of Galileo: Joseph Needham and the 'germ warfare' allegations in the Korean War', History, 86/284, (Oct. 2001), 503-22, Needham was a Cambridge biochemist who ran the Sino-British Scientific Co-operation Office in China between 1942-6, prior to helping to establish UNESCO in Paris. His MI5 surveillance file reveals that he was already under suspicion prior to the Korean War

as, in the summer of 1949, a proposal to appoint him as the British Council's new representative in Shanghai was swiftly dropped. When the Foreign Office sought the opinion of Sir Horace Seymour, British Ambassador to China during Needham's mission, Seymour replied that his former colleague had the 'most exceptional qualities' for work in China, and that he had a 'very high respect and liking for him'. However, referring to the recent defection of the British Council's representative in Poland, George Bidwell, he had added that 'you don't want yet another British Council chap joining the C.P. with a flourish of trumpets'. TNA, KV 2/3055, memorandum on 'Professor Needham's suitability for the post of British Council representative in China', Seymour to Warner (Foreign Office), 6 Oct. 1949.

[31] TNA, KV 2/1559, 2 May 1952. In the event no amendment was made.

[32] TNA, KV 2/3055, 31 Aug. 1950, Needham to Mrs Joyce Smith.

[33] For a detailed account of Felton's career see Mark Clapson, 'The rise and fall of Monica Felton, British town planner and peace activist, 1930s to 1950s', Planning Perspectives, 30:2, 2015, 211-229.

[34] Britain-China Friendship News, 6, Oct-Nov. 1950, 3.

[35] Daily Worker, 26 April 1952.

[36] Needham Research Institute, Cambridge, SCC2/261/4, Needham to Cedric Dover, 23 Oct. 1952.

[37] University of Kent, Hewlett Johnson papers, item 1845, BCFA press statement, 8 July 1952, 6, and item 1629, China Monthly Review, Sept. 1952, 218.

[38] TNA, FO 924/931, 20 Feb. 1951, note by Ashley Clarke, (emphasis added).

[39] The Times, 11 August, 1950.

[40] TNA, FO 924/931.

[41] SOAS, Pratt papers, PPMS 5/15, Douglas Young to Pratt, 20 July 1951.

[42] SOAS, Pratt papers, PPMS 5/14, Blunden to Pratt, 20 Jan. 1951.

[43] New Statesman, 28 Nov. 1953.

[44] Christ Church, Oxford, Driberg papers, R4, Steve Barber to Driberg, 10 Nov. and 15 Dec. 1950.

[45] See, for example, Monica Felton, What I saw in Korea (London, 1951), 11. For Montagu see TNA, HO 45/25583, file 865004/196, Special Branch report, 17 April 1951, 8.

[46] Peace News, 25 July 1952. In his book Cry Korea (London, 1951) Thompson was highly critical of what he called the Americans' 'atom mind' (the 'long-range destruction of humanity' by push-button weapons, 197).

[47] Peace News, 7 Nov. 1952. However, the British did not escape censure: at a BCFA meeting on 25 April 1952 the Canadian missionary Dr James Endicott pointed out that it was not 'a very great step from the poisoning of crops as the British were doing in Malaya [ie the use of defoliants], to the poisoning of people' (TNA, HO 45/25583, file 865004/196).

[48] Christ Church, Oxford, Driberg papers, R4, 20 Jan. 1951, Driberg to Miss M Reid.

[49] Daily Herald, 31 July 1950.

[50] TNA, HO 45/25583, file 865004/196.

[51] Cambridge University Library (CUL), Add 8950, UNA Eastern Region, Regional Council Executive Committee minutes, 3 March 1951; Imperial War Museum (IWM),

London, Needham papers, JNP/56, A Fuller to Needham, 11 Nov. 1952 and Needham's reply, 20 Nov. 1952.
[52] CUL, Add 8950, UNA Eastern Region, Regional Council EC minutes, 8 Nov. and 13 Dec. 1952.
[53] Felton, That's why I went, p.11.
[54] TNA, HO 45/25583, file 865004/271, report of meeting on 25 June 1952, 2.
[55] New Statesman 12 Dec. 1953, 'The truth about germ warfare'.
[56] Tony Shaw, 'The Information Research Department of the British Foreign Office and the Korean War, 1950-53', Journal of Contemporary History, 34:2, (1999) 263-81.
[57] TNA, HO 45/25583, file 865004/200, esp. letter of 31 Oct. 1950 to the Home Secretary.
[58] See, for instance, 'The Communist Germ Warfare campaign' (June 1952) in TNA, FO 975/62, and John Clews, Communist propaganda techniques (London, 1964).
[59] Daily Herald, 13 June 1951.
[60] For example, John McNair of the Independent Labour Party received help from the Foreign Office in countering Sir John Pratt's allegations about how the war started (TNA, FO 371/92804), as did the Conservative MP John Baker White in attacking the Dean of Canterbury (TNA FO 1110/494, PR 41/273).
[61] IWM, Needham papers, JNP/81, Needham to Jack Dribbon (BCFA), 19 Dec. 1952.
[62] Although she had published an article in the Communist Daily Worker (14 Aug. 1936) about her experiences in Majorca at the start of the Spanish Civil War.
[63] TNA, FO 924/932, note by Sir William Strang, 7 July 1951; TNA, FO 924/931, Scott's report of meeting with Pratt on 16 Feb. 1951.
[64] TNA, FO 1110/494, 14 Aug. 1952 note by J.W. Nicholls.
[65] University of Kent, Hewlett Johnson papers, item 1730, Palme Dutt to Johnson, 12 July 1952.
[66] House of Lords debates, 15 July 1952, cols 1116-64.
[67] Porter, Communist China, 130; John Butler, The Red Dean of Canterbury: The Public and Private faces of Hewlett Johnson (London, 2011), 198; Daily Herald, 9 July 1952
[68] University of Kent, Hewlett Johnson papers, item 4467, 6 Aug. 1952, George Cumiskey to Johnson.
[69] TNA, KV 2/2152, Johnson to Pollitt, 4 Aug. 1952; report, BIF/NH, 11 Aug. 1952.
[70] The full extent of the war's brutality – including atrocities against civilians by both sides – is now widely recognised by historians. For instance, Sheila Miyoshi Jager has recently written that Alan Winnington's account of a massacre by South Korean forces at Taejon was accurate, but easily dismissed as Communist propaganda (Brothers at War: The unending conflict in Korea (London, 2013), 94). However, following the end of the Cold War and the opening of the Soviet archives many of the most serious allegations made by opponents of the war have been shown to be false. For instance, there is now clear proof of a premeditated invasion by North Korean forces, with Stalin's approval, as well as convincing evidence that the 'germ warfare' allegations were a Chinese propaganda ploy (see Kathryn Weathersby, 'Deceiving the deceivers: Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang and the allegations of bacteriological weapons use in Korea', Cold War International History Project, 1999. I

am also grateful to Milton Leitenberg for drawing my attention to Drew Casey's recent translation of a document by Wu Zhili, "The bacteriological warfare of 1952 is a false alarm", published in The Institute for National Strategic Studies, Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, Staff Report, 27 April 2015).

[71] IWM, Needham papers, JNP/66, 30 Oct. 1952, Davies to Needham.

[72] University of Kent, Hewlett Johnson papers, item 1786, memorandum from d'Eye for Bishop of Dover, undated,

[73] SOAS, Pratt papers, PPMS 5/14, Purcell to Pratt, 3 March 1951. For Purcell's political position see his letter of 8 Oct. 1951 to Michael Lindsay in which he claimed that he had been misled into becoming a Vice-President of the BCFA by Needham, who assured him that it was a broad-based organisation. He resigned when he realised that it was 'still Communist-controlled…if I wished to join the CP I would do it by the front door'. (I am grateful to Susan Lawrence for letting me consult the Michael Lindsay papers).

[74] University of Bradford, Peace News archive, PN/10/213.

[75] For an excellent recent account see S.P.Mackenzie, British prisoners of the Korean War (Oxford, 2012).

[76] Matthew Sweet, http://spitalfieldslife.com/2011/11/04/michael-shapiro-from-stepney-to-peking/ (accessed on 18 April 2013).

[77] Sheffield University. Alan Winnington papers, Winnington to Burchett, 12 July 1952. (I am grateful to Professor Colin Holmes for allowing me to consult these papers).

[78] See Alan Winnington, Breakfast with Mao: Memoirs of a foreign correspondent (London, 1986), 159-71; Buchanan, East Wind, 132. The principal evidence in the Winnington papers is a five-page letter to Wilfred Burchett about how to make propaganda out of 'our camps' (12 July 1952), as well as letters sent to individual prisoners.

[79] TNA, DPP 2/2423, 'The Kavanagh-Shapiro incident' by C Cunningham, 24 March 1955; and a sanitised version in MOD, Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Korea (London, 1955), 27. However, while the case against Shapiro was considered particularly grave, even this evidence was thought to be vulnerable in court as the POW who was the principal source (Robert Cocks) was himself a member of the Communist Party and had taken a particular dislike to Shapiro.

[80] Observer, profile of Gaster. 23 March 1952; TNA KV2/1559, summary of information in Batch 19 of letters, 2 Aug. 1952.

[81] Manchester Guardian, 1 March 1955; TNA, KV2/1559, 4 June 1952, memorandum for A19.

[82] Daily Worker, 14 June 1951.

[83] TNA, HO 45/25583, file 865004/271.

[84] TNA, HO 45/25583, file 865004/271, report of meeting on 6 March 1954, 7; Cocks had been questioned by the army's Special Investigation Branch for his role in promoting the 'peace movement' in the camps (Daily Worker, 28 Jan. 1954).

[85] See S P Mackenzie, 'The individualist collaborator: Andy Condron in Korea and China, 1950-62', War & Society, 30:2, (2011), 147-65.

[86] Christ Church, Driberg papers, R4, Condron to Driberg, 11 and 18 Sept. 1952; C4, Driberg to Condron, 4 Dec. 1951 and 12 June 1953; Felton to Driberg, 21 Oct. 1953,

[87] LHASC, CP/CENT/PERS/06/07, no date, Gaster to Shapiro.
[88] Sheffield University, Winnington papers, 21 Sept. 1952, Winnington to Shapiro.
[89] TNA, DEFE 7/1805 (for instance, a reference to Shapiro acting as an "interrogator" was altered to the more neutral phrase 'individually interviewed': see MOD, Treatment of prisoners, 26-7).
[90] Sheffield University, Winnington papers, 5 March 1955, Winnington to Burchett (this refers to MOD, Treatment of Prisoners, 23-4).
[91] Sheffield University, Winnington papers, 5 March 1955, Winnington to Burchett.
[92] Labour History Archives and Study Centre (LHASC), Manchester, CP Pers 06/ 07, Shapiro to Gaster, 8 May 1956.
[93] This paragraph is based on the following files: TNA, FO 372/8021; FO 372/8084; FO 372/8085; FO 372/8088; the final quotation comes from FCO 53/37, notes by 'MS' and 'PW', 18 July 1968 and 19 July 1968.
[94] Daily Worker, 16 June 1951.
[95] See David Caute, The fellow travellers: A postscript to the Enlightenment (London, 1977), 292 and 300-01; HHC, NCCL papers, UDCL/25/4, League for Democratic Rights to Elizabeth Allen, 5 May 1953.
[96] The Times, 7 March 1970.
[97] Sheffield University, Winnington papers, Winnington to colleagues in Beijing, 29 July 1952.
[98] LHASC, Manchester, CP/CENT/PC/02/20.
[99] TNA, DPP 2/2425, memorandum of 30 June 1955.
[100] Independent, 1 Oct. 2006; Roger Hermiston, The greatest traitor: The secret lives of agent George Blake (London, 2014).
[101] SOAS, Pratt papers, PPMS 5/16, Pratt to Connolly, 29 Sept. 1952. Connolly had recently written two articles on Burgess and Maclean in the Sunday Times, and they subsequently formed the basis of his book The missing diplomats (London, 1952).