

THE HONG KONG CHINESE: ANOTHER BRITISH BETRAYAL

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Too often Britons smugly congratulate themselves on their political virtues, on Britain as a “land of hope glory” and a haven for the victims of political oppression over the centuries. Certainly, there has been a willingness to accept even those refugees like Marx and Lenin, whose own political ambitions and malevolence were even worse than those from whom they fled. There is a degree of truth in British self-congratulation, of course, but not, as I hope to demonstrate in this article, enough.

Post-War Atrocities

Within the lifetime of most readers of this essay, Britain has been responsible for at least two atrocities over which a veil of silence has been allowed to rest. Count Nikolai Tolstoy and Nicholas Bethell have both outlined one: the forced repatriation from 1944 to 1947 of tens of thousands of refugees from the Soviet Union to the Gulag and certain death. The British bureaucrats and politicians (like Harold Macmillan) responsible for this atrocity have never been brought to

justice and only the determined efforts of these two authors have kept alive some knowledge of this crime.¹ The Conservative Party bureaucracy, and even certain “dry” Tory politicians, are content to sweep the truth under the historical carpet.

But even more heinous was the treatment by Britain of the Jews of Europe. For the brutal fact is that when Hitler’s persecution started, the doors of Britain (and America and Canada too) were well and truly shut in their faces. Indeed, the trade union pressure of the British Medical Association even managed to achieve a *reduction* of the quota of Jewish doctors allowed entry into Britain.

Blind Eye to the Holocaust

This barring of Jewish refugees from Britain, the Empire and Palestine, was not merely confined to the early stages of Hitler’s persecution and the War. It was maintained throughout the Holocaust. The full story of the British Establishment’s curious reluctance to acknowledge the

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extent of the Holocaust or take appropriate action has still to be told fully, although Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*.² is the best work so far.

But such acts of inhumanity cannot merely be explained away as errors due to the exigencies, confusions, or ignorance of war. The fact is that at this very moment the British government is consigning to death and slavery thousands of individuals. In Hong Kong the British Army is dedicated to the task *not* of defending the citizens of Hong Kong, but of keeping refugees from Communism *out!* Can you conceive of the horror of this? To flee from the poverty, the massacres, the continual repression of Communism; to risk one's life in fleeing this nightmare; only to be sent back to slavery or death after one has reached a bastion of freedom.

The Hong Kong Chinese Betrayed

To add the ultimate insult to this ongoing injury, the British government has committed another betrayal of freedom. It has totally sold out the people of Hong Kong to Communist China. Yet hardly a word of protest has been raised in this country at the Government's declarations that the Hong Kong Chinese will be denied British passports. While one can understand the reluctance of the Government to go to war with China over Hong Kong, an alternative was open: the mass evacuation of the Chinese to this country (or any other they wish to go to).

We are, then, simply waiting for the enactment of the next atrocity; the script has already been written. When the Vietnamese and Cambodian Boat People fled their genocidal Communist regimes, the West consigned most of them to the depredations of the sea and of murderous pirates, by denying them adequate sanctuary. To these victims it now appears we will be adding the Hong Kong Chinese.

The Evil of Immigration Controls

Throughout Europe the doors are shutting not simply on ordinary migrants but on political refugees, from Communist, socialist or "right wing" statist tyrannies alike, and a few individuals, to their credit, have protested this growing trend.³ But the real evil lies precisely in the distinction between "political" and "economic" refugees. The latter, it is frequently claimed, are not "real refugees". To escape from interference

with one's free speech, reading matter or political views is apparently laudible, but to escape from interference with one's economic activities, to better one's economic position, is apparently less laudible, a matter of vulgar materialism and commercialism. Such an attitude is actually part of precisely the anti-capitalist, anti-individualist mentality that produces political and economic oppression.

There can be no partial or "discretionary" solution to the crimes we have outlined, to the policies that have produced the victims of Yalta, the victims of the Jewish immigration controls, the victims of the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Biafran, Ugandan immigration controls - or the next set of victims, the Hong Kong Chinese. We must remove totally the government's power to interfere with the free movement of individuals. We must remove *all* immigration controls.

Moreover, such a removal is not merely the only humane policy, ultimately it is the most economically beneficial. The trade union fear that lower domestic wage rates will result is a chimera. Unrestrained immigration will benefit us all, as both the American experience and scientific economic theory demonstrate.⁴ Government interference with the free flow of labour is as harmful as interference with the free flow of goods or capital, and for precisely the same reasons.

British Governments have, alas, much blood on their hands. We cannot reverse the atrocities of the past. Let us desist from the atrocities of both the present and the future.

1. See Nikolai Tostoy and Nicholas Bethell, *The Last Secret: Forcible Repatriation to Russia 1944-7*, André Deutsch, London, 1974.
2. Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, Oxford University Press, 1979.
3. Rosemary Righter, 'Europeans Slam The Door on the World's Political Refugees', *Sunday Times*, 29 April, 1984.
4. See Richard Ebeling, *In Defence of Free Migration*, Libertarian Reprints No. 3, Libertarian Alliance, 1983.

Special Note:

Those interested in the plight of the Hong Kong Chinese should subscribe to: Hong Kong Monitor, 88 Tylney Road, London, E7 OLY.