

More losses

While researching a book about the French resistance, the author, James Bacque stumbled upon the evidence of the deaths of German prisoners in American and French internment camps after World War Two. His book, *Other Losses*, has been vilified, praised and sold around the world since publication in Toronto, London and Berlin in 1989.

The Challenges of Bringing Truth

James Bacque

A writer who brings a truth into this resisting world needs many strong friends. Luckily I had them when I published to the western world the stunning news that the victorious allies of World War Two had killed a million and a half German prisoners of war in death camps after the war. The deaths in American camps totalled 750,000; in French camps 250,000 and in the USSR 500,000. In addition, the allies had starved to death countless millions more civilians in the vast prison camp that was Occupied Germany between 1945 and 1950.

This unwelcome news in my book *Other Losses* broke first in *Saturday Night* magazine edited by John Fraser, who is well aware that journalism thrives on innocuous controversy. He provoked a tsunami of praise and thanks among millions of survivors.

The Americans began planning the war crime and the cover-up in the late winter of 1945. The American commander, and Supreme Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, later president of the USA, asked Washington to send him an order that would permit him to downgrade the food and shelter for the prisoners now flooding into his camps. This was achieved by renaming the categories so that most prisoners received no shelter, little or no water, and starvation-ration food. The renaming gave the Americans a specious excuse to keep the Red Cross out of the camps, which were supposed, under the Geneva Convention, to be open to their inspectors. Some



James Bacque, photo by Sewell Russell.

5,224,310 German POWs were captured and held in northwest Europe plus millions more in Italy, Austria and North Africa. Few died among the prisoners held by the US outside Germany and very few among the two million or so in British and Canadian camps. Deaths in the French camps among some 800,000 prisoners were caused partly by previous starvation and exposure in US German camps, and also by maltreatment in French hands.

Washington also told Eisenhower that “Germans are responsible for feeding and maintaining disarmed German troops.” But Eisenhower disobeyed this order the day after the war ended by issuing a letter sent by “urgent courier” to the top officials of the German *laender* (provinces) that told them that it was now a crime punishable by shooting for citizens to assemble food supplies “in order to deliver them to the German prisoners of war.”

So many letters of thanks and praise from ex-prisoners were received by the editors of *Saturday*



Night and *Die Welt* in Germany that they had to stop printing them — the editors of *Die Welt* asked their readers to stop writing.

In contrast to the letter writers who had nearly all been in the camps, the critics who soon swarmed around were nearly all academic historians who had never been near the camps. Many disputed my statistics, motives, sources and conclusions while some also attacked my character. The “historical” criticisms had no more substance than the breeze from ruffled feathers; the lead critic, Stephen E. Ambrose admitted that he had done no research before mounting his attack. Ambrose said in the *New York Times* that “...when scholars do the necessary research, they will find Mr. Bacque's work to be worse than worthless.” One professor at York University, Gabriel Kolko, said in *Time* magazine that my statistics were all wrong. My publisher Nelson Doucet wrote to him asking for corrections. There was no reply.

That Ambrose review sank the book in the USA although there were some favourable reviews there — in *Time* magazine and on Dan Rather's CBS News. But in the words of a New York

bookseller at The Military Bookman, it has “been deep-sixed” where it was most needed — in the USA. It was endorsed by a Senior Historian of the United States Army, Col. Ernest F. Fisher — no matter. It has been reviewed and praised by scholars and writers around the world, notably Julian Barnes and Richard Overy in the UK — no matter. Its sensational statistics have been authenticated by the Bulanov Report found in the Central State Special Archive of the KGB in Moscow — no matter. None of them could cancel out in the USA the mighty *Times*. Most American editors and publishers will not credit the book, and none of the Canadian critics who dismissed it in the past will now admit there is anything to discuss.

The campaign against *Other Losses* and *Crimes and Mercies*, the books that documented these findings, has been devastating for me, my readers, and my family. Not a single Canadian editor or publisher of either books or magazines has accepted any other manuscript of mine for publication in 23 years. After Patrick Martin at the *Globe and Mail* published a short news piece by me in the early nineties, he came in the next morning to find that issue of the paper on his desk folded open to the page with my byline. As if to say, ‘We're watching you.’ The *Globe* never accepted anything from me again, not even a letter, although I had written many features and book reviews for them in the past. Deprived of my livelihood, I couldn't keep our family home in Toronto, so my wife and I had to sell our house and move to a shaky little cottage in the woods on Georgian Bay.

The anonymous warning to Martin was the same sort of warning I received when copies of documents I had bought from the Public Records Office (PRO) in London were stolen from the envelope mailed to me by the PRO. The envelope had been torn open, the documents in it removed, and the empty envelope delivered to me in a Canada Post envelope stating that the original envelope had arrived in damaged condition. This happened again, with documents from an archive in Köln, (Cologne) Germany. The envelope had been burgled, the documents stolen and the empty envelope sent on to me. At a colleague's request, I sent some taped historical films to him in

Germany. They were confiscated without notice by the German post office.

The CBC broadcast a one-hour defamation featuring many incorrect statements and nasty innuendoes about me. I consulted a libel lawyer who told me I had a good case, but that my first hour in court would cost about \$25,000 and that if the CBC fought all the way to the Supreme Court it could cost me my house. I decided to fight them the best way I could, in print. But I found that

I came upon the first clues to that cooperation while living in France soon after the publication of *Other Losses* in 1989. Elisabeth, my wife, and I were staying in a villa owned by friends. Since this was France and I knew some of the characteristics of French technology, I was not surprised to find that the phone in our borrowed villa had an odd buzz in it. I called the phone company (PTT) and the next day saw a man in the driveway wearing a suit, carrying a briefcase. I



Searchlights Rheinberg. Detail of a sketch by Otto Frerichs, Rheinberg Town Archives.

publishers would not even return my calls, and I could not afford to self-publish.

The last commission I ever received, before *Humanist Perspectives* noticed the case, was in 1991 when the very able John Fraser at *Saturday Night* magazine asked me to go to Moscow and investigate the KGB archives on prisoners of war. I went, discovered the sensational Bulanov Report, which validates completely Fraser's judgment and my books, and came home with an article that I submitted to the new *Saturday Night* editor who had replaced Fraser. This was Ken Whyte who turned down the article and refused to publish anything by me from then on, not even a letter. He did publish something by a principal critic of mine, John Keegan, a British writer who had been in cahoots with the State Department, the US army and Steve Ambrose in the effort to discredit my work.

asked if he was the man from the PTT, he said yes, I told him we were going out but he could go in and fix the phone.

Unsuspecting, I later called on that same phone — now buzzless — to my editor in Toronto, Nelson Doucet, and told him that I had made a new discovery about the prison camps. He agreed to keep this secret until I was ready to include it in my next book for him. I then read a review by John Keegan of *Other Losses* in an English journal. I called Keegan the next day to point out several major errors in his review. And he said, "But you believe...." And went on to repeat what I had said on the phone to Doucet a few days day before. I was stunned. How could he have possibly found out? If I were being spied upon, the French *Sûreté* would have had to know about my work, which was still being translated into French; they would have had to care about it, read and understand it,

track me to this private villa, bug my calls going out, and then immediately phone Keegan. This was such a preposterous chain of events, that my wife Elisabeth and I dismissed it.

Some years later in Toronto, Fraser kindly told me to get in touch with a certain Rod Stamler, an ex-Deputy Commissioner of the RCMP who had recently quit the force in protest against policies of which he disapproved. Stamler told me how the spying was done. The Canadian government by secret agreement with the Americans, routinely downloads all micro-wave calls, money transfers, e-mails from and to American citizens that might be of interest to the US. This surveillance is legal under Canadian law. In return, the US downloads all such calls by Canadian citizens, again a legal act under American law. The two nations then exchange this information on a basis so routine that the word Stamler used to describe the transfer was "publish."

All this is accomplished through computers aware of syntax that can distinguish among the uses of a word such as burns, which can be a verb or noun. The computers flag the calls of high interest, which are identified by the frequency of important words, and are then read by a human being.

Two American experts watched me, Steve Ambrose of the Eisenhower Center in Louisiana and Bert Cowdrey of the United States Army Center for Military History in Washington, a former colleague of Col. Fisher. I knew this because they frequently published articles, reviews, even a book, and gave TV interviews. They also interviewed one of my key witnesses in an attempt to change his statement.

Stamler's information helped me to understand how it was done. Americans downloaded my call to Doucet, sent the information to Cowdrey and to Ambrose, who then informed Keegan. A couple of phone calls or e-mails among colleagues was all it took to tell those who cared what Bacque was saying.

Many other mysteries were solved by Stamler's explanations, but not all. I wonder to

this day why the ex-KGB colonel, Alexei Kirichenko, living in Moscow proposed that we write a book together. I wonder why British Airways bothered to intercept my computer at Heathrow while I was en route to Moscow for research. Why did the Cabinet Office in the UK hide documents from me for years, then suddenly release them after my work was published? All my work had shown that the British and Canadians, alone among the allies, had treated their millions of prisoners pretty much according to the Geneva Convention, and certainly well enough that I never received complaints about them from any of the thousands of survivors who have written and spoken to me. But for years, the British have been

hiding their clean laundry while their tame historians such as Keegan have been defending the Americans with specious arguments. The International Red Cross in Geneva has been routinely denying me access to their records on the ground that they do not allow writers into their records. This is a lie, but why do they tell it? Having denied me access, the Red Cross also refused to show to the Canadian army the records

of their visits to Canadian and British camps.

The only answer I can think of is that the myth of spotless Allied virtue depends on a supporting myth of unmixed German evil. This evil includes the myth that Germans alone are responsible for starting the war; that they alone are responsible for the deaths of millions of Jews and others; and that they initiated the devastating aerial bombardment of cities as a common practice in warfare. To reveal or demonstrate an anomaly in these claims easily provokes the wildest claims of anti-Semitism, revisionism, conspiracy theory, Nazism, neo-Nazism, not only in Germany but throughout western academe and the press as well.

I have tried to enlist the help of the Writers Union of Canada, PEN International and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, (CCLA) and I have been repeatedly frustrated. A few years ago, I asked my friend Roy McMurtry, sometime Attorney General of Ontario and Chief Justice to

'Steve Ambrose of the Eisenhower Center in Louisiana: "... you have a sensational if appalling story and it can no longer be suppressed, and I suppose (in truth, I know) it must be published ..."

Meritt P. Drucker
7507 12th Street NW
Washington, DC 20012
202 722 6716
druckersloss@aol.com

March 3, 2011

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton
US State Department
2201 C Street NW
Washington DC, 20520

Mayor Hans-Theo Mennicken
Mayor of the City of Rheinberg
Kirchplatz 10
Stadt Rheinberg
47495 Rheinberg
Federal Republic of Germany

Ambassador Klaus Scharloth
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
2300 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Ambassador Phillip D. Murphy
US Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany
Clayallee 170
14191 Berlin
Federal Republic of Germany

SUBJECT: Recognition of German Deaths in US Army POW/DEF Camps in 1945/1946

Mayor Mennicken and Ambassador Scharloth,

I am writing to recognize and acknowledge the deaths of German and other nations' citizens who died in the US Army prison camps in 1945 and 1946 in Germany. It is my understanding that no US official has ever acknowledged in formal terms that these deaths occurred, despite ample evidence that these were caused by US Government policies carried out by the US Army.

I am submitting to you an apology for the actions of my Government, and for the actions of the US Army, that caused these deaths. These were needless, unjustified, avoidable, and carried out with calculated viciousness.


I ask that the Mayor of Rheinberg read this recognition and apology letter to the Town Council, post a copy to the city website, and place a copy in the city archives.

I ask that Secretary Clinton and Ambassador Murphy make a formal personal apology to the residents of the City of Rheinberg, at the city of Rheinberg, and by letter to the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany. I ask that copies be provided to the Rheinberg archives and to the Archives of the FRG.

It is my hope that recognition of these deaths and the policies that caused them will prevent a future occurrence.

That I would like to ask that Ambassador Scharloth transmit a copy of this letter to the family of Herr Otto Stover, a prisoner held in Rheinberg. He was the Heimbetreib Canteen Manager at NATO/Bundeswehr Lager Trauen in 1987.

I would like to request a written reply to this letter.


Meritt P. Drucker
Major, US Army (Retired)
Reichel Kaserne/2 Am Muhlenturm Str. Alpen

MR. Bacque
your copies -
It would mean
a lot to me if
you could keep
on file with your
records. We will
make this
right!
Monax

My letters and warnings to PEN and TWUC have been unanswered and unacknowledged perhaps because they were too busy trying to help writers in trouble in distant countries to notice the same thing among their own members.

My decades of attempts to get published again have been comical in their ineffectiveness. As most victims do, I looked first to myself to see what I was doing wrong. Was my work historically incorrect? My critics said so, but showed little if any evidence. When the KGB archives were opened, the Austrian critic Stefan Karner visited them, but afterward said that he preferred to use "estimates" rather than the detailed documentation in those massive archives. These estimates were his own, and confirmed his theory, whereas the KGB figures confirmed the overall atrocity that I had discovered. (For this strange story, see my *Crimes and Mercies*, Talonbooks, 2007.)

The case with *Saturday Night* and Stoddart, the first publishers of *Other Losses* was creepy. Kirichenko wormed his way into my house in Toronto under the false pretence of working with me as co-author on a book, and then one day, after I had been away for a few hours and had suddenly returned, I noticed his vinegary body-odour in my office, where he had no business to be. My files ... were disturbed, a picture was missing, and the copy paper was exhausted although the feeder had been full. He went back to Moscow after I said I would not work with him, but he hired a lawyer and threatened to sue both Stoddart and *Saturday Night* if they

published me. Both turned down my next offerings, although Stoddart had made much money from *Other Losses*, which was on the best-seller list for 16 weeks. My German agent and my publisher, Ullstein dropped me in the mid nineties after making many D-Marks from my newer book, *Verschwiegene Schuld* (*Crimes and Mercies*) as well as *Der Geplante Tod* (*Other Losses*). Both

take an interest in my case, because I knew from Stamler and a serving Ontario police officer that I and others have been subjected to illegal wire taps and police burglaries. McMurtry gave me a very nice lunch in his office, decorated with some of his first-rate paintings, and sent me on to Alan Borovoy at the CCLA who sent me to an assistant who offered me a cup of tea. That was it.

were selling well at the time and both were immediately picked up by another German publisher, so lack of sales was not the problem.

The only answer I have found was that my two books dealing with this issue had suddenly been deemed politically incorrect, meaning that governments, newspapers and academe did not like them because they ignored the Allied party line on German history that has been adopted and supported in Germany. That party line, much enforced by the so-called *AntiFa*, or AntiFascists, is that the victorious allies are not only perfumed with all the world's virtue but also that the Germans reek of all the world's sins. Anything that shows the Germans as victims, whether of the Nazis or Hitler or the allies is shunned along with its author; anything that shows the Americans or British fomenting war in 1938-9 is suppressed, as Herbert Hoover's book *Freedom Betrayed* was for fifty years after his death. It has only last year been published and is widely ignored in the west because it shows with much documentation that US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1938-9 was urging the Poles to stand up to Hitler; if they would, the USA would support them with all aid short of war, i.e. with arms, money and diplomacy.

Steve Ambrose frankly admitted suppression in a letter to me in 1988 after he had read the draft of *Other Losses*. He said, "... you have a sensational if appalling story and it can no longer be suppressed, and I suppose (in truth, I know) it must be published ..."

Think of that. When he wrote those words he was the most famous and the best selling of American historians — consultant to presidents, advisor to Steven Spielberg, biographer of Eisenhower, expert on World War Two — and here he was admitting to a foreigner, not even an academic but a mere writer, that this story had been suppressed. And still is being suppressed, partly by his own doing.

Merrit P. Drucker
7507 12th Street NW
Washington DC, 20012
Druckermiles@aol.com
202 722 6716

October 31, 2011

Letter of Recognition and Apology

Max Klaar,
LTC, Retired
Federal Chairman of the German Soldiers Association

I would like to recognize and apologize for the mistreatment of German Prisoners of War held by the United States, in Germany and France, from 1945 to 1946.

The conditions under which they were held were a violation of the Geneva Convention, an international treaty both our Nations had signed. Their captivity was characterized by callous brutality and extreme, often lethal, privation at a time when we had both the moral obligation and the material means to properly care for former enemies in our hands.

I ask that you communicate this message to the former POWs and to their families. The suffering and loss of life was unjustified by any concept of military or political necessity, delayed the economic and political recovery of Western Europe, and added to the enormous human misery caused by the war.

Although I am not French, I would like to extend this message to you on behalf of the French people, some of whom acted with compassion and decency in contravention of their government's policies.

My hope is that this small initial step by a private American citizen will encourage my government to make an official apology. I have asked my government to do. Ultimately, I would like to see our mutual efforts result in a more just and humane international order, characterized by respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Respectfully,

Merrit P. Drucker
Major, US Army
(Retired)

The three books I have been able to publish since 1989 were either subsidized or else published abroad and exported to a branch plant in Canada. *Crimes and Mercies* was published in the UK by Alan Samson at Little, Brown who explained to me that he was publishing such controversial material because "publishing is a broad church." They exported copies to Little, Brown Canada which was so indifferent to the book that they ran out of stock the day after publication although it was already number six on the best-seller list.

I was soon informed by Little, Brown's promotion manager Sarah MacLachlan that the book had no budget for promotion, so I pitched in to help. At Christmas, she told me that whatever had been done was my own effort. Not many

weeks later, Little, Brown Canada was closed down by the parent company who later admitted to me that they had skipped payment to me on 700 hardcover copies because the books had been lost, not sold. At the same time that 700 copies were being mislaid the Canadian branch was ordering new copies to be printed and flown over to meet demand. Even among the inept publishers of Canada, this was a record for most fumbles with a best-seller in the Christmas season.

Over the years, I asked three times for Canada Council grants to work on a new book, and twice was refused. I asked for an Ontario Arts Council grant and was turned down. I finished a new manuscript about Germany in the modern world and offered it to 12 Canadian houses who all turned it down. So I asked a historical foundation for a grant and Fenn published *Dear Enemy* on that basis. They tried energetically to promote it, but not a single review appeared anywhere in Canada. The trade paper *Quill and Quire* did not even print a notice of its appearance.

Compared to *War and Peace*

I spent seven years writing my new novel, *Our Fathers' War*, and circulated it to well-known authors who gave it very good recommendations. One compared it favourably to Tolstoy's *War And Peace*. Another blurb was from the editor of a major series with McClelland and Stewart, David Staines, who worked on the book as a favour to me and to literature in Canada, I hope. Carrying the commendation of one of her own writers, the manuscript went to Ellen Seligman at McClelland and Stewart. They turned it down without reading it. Martha Sharpe at Anansi did read it and praised it to my agent, Ramsay Derry, saying it was a "very very good book..." then Anansi turned it down. Exile Editions got a subsidy to publish it. Not a single review appeared anywhere in Canada. Nor did *Quill and Quire* give it a notice.

At that point in my career, I had long since written my first novel, *The Lonely Ones*, which was published by McClelland and Stewart in Canada and Macmillan in the UK, a unique feat in the seventies. It was widely reviewed and sold well. Because of it, Michael Ondaatje invited me to lecture to his students at Glendon College at

York University. The book was included in McClelland and Stewart's prestigious New Canadian Library series.

I had written two other best-sellers, four hours of TV documentaries had been broadcast about my work, my Google hit-list has lately been at over 300,000 most of the time, my books were sold all over the world in many languages, but I could scarcely get published in Canada without some kind of subsidy. My own government was silencing me in order to defend war criminals.

There is no doubt in my mind that this farrago has been created by an unnecessary hatred of Germans and Germany and a smug love of our own purported virtues. The problem with our reasoning this way is that one source of our love of our selves derives from our hatred of others.

The end of the matter one might think had come when Steve Ambrose was accused of plagiarism toward the end of his writing career. He denied this but his critics revealed his instances of plagiarism in chapter and verse. Then he was shown to have made many historical mistakes in several of his most famous books. He had also lied about having interviewed his beloved Ike Eisenhower.

Ambrose died discredited and shamed, but his attacks on *Other Losses* are still broadly influential.

And then a miracle occurred. In March, 2011, Major Merrit P Drucker of the United States Army (retired) wrote to me saying he needed help in investigating the charges in *Other Losses*. As a proud American, he was ashamed to think of his country committing such wrongs. He investigated the facts for over a year intermittently in archives in Germany and the USA with the help of independent scholars in the UK, Germany, the USA and Canada. He is still continuing his research as I write and has uncovered much new and fascinating material including the personal diary of the British commander of a 1945 camp, Rheinberg, which had been American, and in barbaric condition when the British took over.

In the end Major Drucker concluded that the facts *Other Losses* had uncovered and published were true and the USA should apologize. Failing

to convince the army and the government to do something, he did it himself. He sent many letters of apology to various church and state authorities in Germany with copies to the State Department and other dignitaries. He organized ceremonies of remembrance and apology in Washington and several places in Germany. Not a single representative of US, Canadian or UK media noticed these amazing events, until this magazine enabled me to tell you about them.

Thank you for that opportunity.

James Bacque

Penetanguishene, August, 2012

James Bacque's books Crimes and Mercies and Other Losses are available in new editions by Talonbooks of Vancouver. His popular comedy Conrad, about a newspaper tycoon named Conrad Lord Bilk of Crosspurposes was presented at the George Ignatieff Theatre in Toronto in 2009 and 2010.

**And now for a few words
from David Hume
of Edinburgh, Scotland
who at age 65 left us in 1776**

"If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion." — David Hume

"When men are most sure and arrogant they are commonly most mistaken, giving views to passion without that proper deliberation which alone can secure them from the grossest absurdities." — David Hume



humanistcanada

reason • ethics • dignity • equality

Promoting the separation from public policy and fostering the development of reason, compassion and critical thinking for all Canadians through secular education and community support.

Top 10 Benefits of Membership

1. Being part of a national secular network of people, spanning all ages, cultures and backgrounds that share your philosophy and way of life.
2. Opportunities for socializing and outreach at the local, provincial and national levels via conferences, lectures and other events that take place throughout the year.
3. Free or discounted admission to Humanist Canada national events.
4. Low annual membership fees.
5. Discounts on Humanist Canada merchandise.
6. Working together on social justice and civil rights issues in Canada.
7. Complimentary promotion for affiliated groups.
8. Priority access to grant funds for groups affiliated with Humanist Canada.
9. Gift of an elegant metallic lapel pin depicting the traditional Happy Human.
10. Free or discounted subscription to Humanism-related magazines and newsletters.



***Join us
today!***

www.HumanistCanada.com
humanist.canada@gmail.com
Fax: 613.739.9569
Box 8752, Stn T, Ottawa, ON K1G 3J1