

Internment — Mixed Feelings Title 23

Our legal status was never clearly defined, although we were finally termed 'Prisoners of War Class 2'. The greatest opposition was raised against the original classification on our arrival in Canada as 'Common Criminals' when we were all fingerprinted and photographed with a large three-figure number on our chest. This was, fortunately, soon changed to simple 'Prisoner of War', to which first was added 'Class 2' and finally 'Class 2 Civilians'.

The one and, apparently, the only real spy in our Cambridge Group was Klaus Fuchs, a physicist who betrayed British and American atomic bomb secrets to the Soviet Union. He was arrested in England in 1950, sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment, but released in 1959 for good conduct. He returned to East Germany, where he was born as the son of a Protestant clergyman. In 1960 he became Director of the Central Institute for Nuclear Research at Rosendorf, near Dresden in East Germany. At the age of 21, he had joined the Communist Party and therefore in 1933, when the Nazis came to power, fled to England, worked at the 'University of Edinburgh' and there obtained his doctorate. Interned like all others as 'Enemy Alien', he shared our Canadian experience and on release returned to England, to the University of Birmingham, working there on the theory of an atomic bomb. Later, having become a naturalised British Subject in 1942, he went to Los Alamos in 1943, where he acquired full knowledge of the atomic bomb research and passed this on to the Soviet Union. I remember Klaus Fuchs from Camp L, as often unshaved; never very clean looking, and a rather sullen individual. His case is a typical example of the inefficiency of the British Intelligence Services; during and after World War II.

The most frequently asked question on our release was "What did you do during the endless hours, days and weeks of leisure?" As soon as any immediate necessities like food, clothing and internal Camp hierarchy had been settled, lectures were organised by the great variety of academic scholars in our midst. With paper, typewriters and copying machines freely available in Canada, much time was spent on writing endless applications for release to British, Canadian and US authorities. I still have copies of six, submitted within a few weeks, all without success.

The lighter side of life could also be indulged, a *Camp L Chronicle* soon made its appearance; essays on a variety of subjects appeared and were circulated. A Cabaret was once staged, and even a Musical Questionnaire with prizes of various quantities of tobacco, was composed. In this respect our Camp Life was similar to all other Prisoner of War camps, wherever the conditions were relaxed and amenable. Similarly, when Captain Scott and his comrades were confined during the long dark Antarctic winter in their crowded hut in 1902, they also published a regular Journal: *The South Polar Times*, see Title 51.

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