

APRIL 30, 1965

Wife of arrested Briton talks

CPYRGHT



The Brookes—on Dartmoor holiday last summer

THEY QUESTIONED ME ALL NIGHT SAYS TEARFUL MRS. BROOKE

From IAN BRODIE: Moscow, Thursday

IN tears tonight a young wife from London told how she was questioned all night by Soviet police after her husband was whisked away under arrest.

Barbara Brooke, 24 and pretty, is going home tomorrow. Her husband, 26-year-old lecturer Gerald Brooke, is still held somewhere in Moscow, perhaps in the Lubyanka prison.

I understand the word "espionage" has not been mentioned by the Russians. They have used the phrase "subversive activities," which could cover anything.

Mr. Brooke's friends here—he was leading a party of British school teachers—think the whole thing is a frame-up.

As one said: "He could not have been involved in anything shady. No man would take his wife along for something like that."

A CALL

It was on Sunday that the young couple—apparently in response to a mysterious telephone invitation—went to visit a Russian husband and wife in Moscow.

Gerald Brooke speaks fluent Russian. Barbara Brooke understands little—and so tonight she still scarcely knew what had happened.

At the Moscow home of Miss Agnes Wood, the newly arrived British Consul, Mrs. Brooke wept as she tried to explain how three Russians burst into the home they were visiting.

"They were all speaking



ROSEMARY HONEY
"Ridiculous"

Russian," she said. "They took me away to another building—I don't know where—and there they questioned me. They kept questioning me all night."

Mrs. Brooke, spectacled, wearing red skirt and beige sweater, went on: "I don't know the exact time the men came because I don't have a watch, but it was latish in the evening. They released me at 7.30 next morning. They just let me go.

"I would rather not say what questions they asked. They did not use any force.

"I don't know the Russian people in the flat. I have no idea if they were arrested."

And her husband? "I don't know," said Mrs. Brooke. She broke down. Miss Wood helped her from the room.

Some of the gaps in the story were filled in by one of Mr. Brooke's touring party, 40-year-old Mr. Paul Harvey, a teacher from Woodford Green, Essex, who first raised the alarm.

Apparently the Brookes were "hospitably welcomed" at the flat they visited.

But, after 15 minutes the three

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Russians came in and told Mr. Brooke he was under arrest.

Mrs. Brooke was taken to what she thought was a police station with large, high-ceilinged offices. She eventually signed a statement.

At dawn the Russians, telling her not to worry about her husband, escorted her back to her hotel, the Bucharest, across the river from the Kremlin.

They took her to her room, No. 602, emptied luggage and turned out drawers.

Finally they confiscated a camera, a school exercise book, and two long-playing records Mr. Brooke had declared to Soviet Customs when he arrived.

The policemen went off saying to Mrs. Brooke: "*We hope you are enjoying your stay.*"

The young wife woke up Mr. Harvey. He went to the British Embassy. Diplomats contacted the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

Back at the hotel Mr. Brooke's tourists decided to say nothing while there was a chance he would be released.

For three days they guarded

Mrs. Brooke—and kept quiet. Today the news came out.

The inquiries had been led by the British Ambassador, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan. On Monday he asked for immediate access to Mr. Brooke.

Yesterday the Foreign Ministry said a "criminal charge" had been made against him.

Today the Ministry told the embassy that the question of a meeting would be "considered." Mrs. Brooke might be allowed to see her husband "in May."

Gerald Brooke, who once spent a year in Moscow as a student, brought 30 secondary school teachers overland for a 14-day course in Russian.

The trip was not officially sponsored, and it was a normal Intourist-guided "rubber necking" affair—until that telephone call on Sunday night.

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