

New head of Britain's MI6 is granddaughter of Ukrainian Nazi mass murderer

Chris Marsden
29 June 2025

The *Daily Mail* claims to have exclusively revealed that the new head of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, Blaise Metreweli, is the granddaughter of a Ukrainian Nazi collaborator.

The *Mail* cites archival research in Germany disclosing that Metreweli's grandfather was Constantine Dobrowolski, "a Ukrainian dubbed 'The Butcher' who defected from the Red Army to become the Fatherland's chief informant in the region of Chernihiv in Ukraine." But it also makes clear that this "research" was only undertaken as a damage limitation exercise after Russian sources had already begun investigating Metreweli's real family background.

The *Mail*'s account begins by painting a nonetheless devastating picture of Dobrowolski, who remained in Nazi-occupied Ukraine while the rest of his family fled following the liberation of the region by Soviet troops in 1943.

Based they say on archives held in Freiburg, Germany, the *Mail* details:

- Dobrowolski was known as "Agent No 30" by his Wehrmacht commanders. He had vowed revenge against the Russians ever since they killed his noble land-owning family after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.
- The Soviet Union put a 50,000-rouble bounty on the local spy chief described as "the worst enemy of the Ukrainian people".
- Handwritten letters to his Nazi superiors boast of Dobrowolski "personally" taking part "in the extermination of the Jews" and killing hundreds of Ukrainian resistance fighters. Personal accounts record his looting the bodies of Holocaust victims and laughing at the sexual assault of female prisoners.

After the death of his family in 1917, Dobrowolski obtained a fake ID and travelled to Moscow but was caught in 1926 and sentenced to ten years in Siberia for anti-Soviet agitation, anti-Semitism and concealing his ancestry.

On the outbreak of war, back home in Ukraine, he immediately reported to the War Commissariat and requested to be sent to the front where he defected to the Nazis at the first opportunity on August 4, 1941. "I wanted

to use the panic to get over to the German side in this way, and all the more quickly," Dobrowolski wrote.

He served with an SS tank unit and later told Nazi officers, "There, I oversaw captured Russian vehicles and personally took part in front-line action near Kyiv and in the extermination of Jews." He is self-reported to have left for his home district of Sosyntsia once again, on September 22, 1941, just seven days before the Baby Yar massacre of 30,000 Jews involving his unit.

In Sosyntsia, Dobrowolski took part in operations that led to the murder of more than 300 Jews, organising a Ukrainian police unit of 300 men who "cleared" 12 sub-districts between October and December 1941.

A witness, interrogated by the Germans, claimed Dobrowolski gave him a gold watch from one of the victims and that his home was filled with carpets, tablecloths, silk shawls, and a luxurious fur coat, "which originated from the Jewish executions in Ponornysia." In his own accounts, Dobrowolski boasted of having "cleansed... undesirable elements," for which he was commended by a Hungarian colonel. After this, the Soviets put the 50,000-rouble bounty on his head.

He became a local intelligence chief, joining the Nazis' secret military police, the Geheime Feldpolizei (GFP), in July 1942. A contemporary German assessment described him as "a convinced opponent of Bolshevism and, accordingly, the most hated man among the Bolsheviks."

When the Nazis were on the brink of defeat in 1943, he was granted a request to get his wife Varvara/Barbara and son out of Snovsk to Germany. Barbara claims to have been a widow when marrying in 1947, though the *Mail* reports Dobrowolski still listed in a 1969 Soviet book documenting the enemies of the USSR as a "wanted case".

The article is accompanied by an editorial comment making explicit that the *Mail*'s motivations are a damage limitation exercise.

Headlined, "Truth can stop Putin smears on MI6 boss," it states, "Malign actors—including Vladimir Putin's supporters—have already been digging into her family

background. It was only a matter of time before they discovered the same facts and twisted them into a propaganda weapon against Ms Metreweli and Britain... she should be allowed to focus on the job she is impeccably qualified to do: Keeping Britain safe from our enemies.”

The article makes clear that the *Mail* was in a race against time and was likely briefed by MI6, which would have been well aware of Metreweli’s pedigree.

The *Mail* states that “her grandfather’s wartime crimes... will be seized upon by the Kremlin, which has sought to portray Ukrainians as ‘Nazis’ and similarly smear Kyiv’s Western backers since its illegal full-scale invasion in 2022. Indeed, Vladimir Putin’s supporters have already discovered that her paternal heritage is Ukrainian, not Georgian as her surname suggests, and tried to use that fact to imply she is descended from a Nazi.”

Tracing her family tree backwards, the *Mail* describes her father, also named Constantine, as a British military veteran and renowned radiologist who raised his daughter and her siblings in Hong Kong. His real family name is recorded in the *London Gazette*, an official UK government journal of record, from 1966, in an entry reading, “Dobrowolski, Constantine (known as Constantine Metreweli); Of uncertain nationality.”

This was not the *Mail*’s discovery, which they acknowledge. The article reports, “It did not take long for Putin’s agents, who have a far more pernicious interest in the Metreweli back story, to find this. For them, this was proof enough that the incoming MI6 spy chief was a Ukrainian, despite the Dobrowolski surname also being common in Poland.”

They cite an unnamed “Russian propagandist” for posting information on social media and suggesting that “this was somehow evidence that it was likely her grandfather was a Nazi.” The relevant post notes, “Post-war Ukrainian emigration to Britain largely consisted of members of the SS Galicia division who surrendered to the British in Italy”.

The *Mail* tries to dismiss these “unfounded claims... soon being widely repeated in the Russian Press.” But it is documented that many members of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS (1st Galician) and other Ukrainian Nazis were allowed into Britain. The “Rimini List” details 8,000 members of the Nazi division entering Britain, with only 32 denied entry because of their war records. This is despite the fact that the regiment was made up of volunteers that took part in notorious massacres in Ukraine and Poland.

It was this online activity, the *Mail* states, that “set in motion a race between historians in Russia, Georgia and Ukraine to get to the truth”—by which is meant an attempt by Britain’s intelligence service to get control of a damaging

narrative.

Later they add that as the *Mail*’s team scoured the Federal Military Archives in Freiburg, Germany, “the Russians were closing in,” citing “long blog posts” on Dobrowolski “whose crimes are well documented in Soviet histories. They had not yet made the link to the new MI6 chief, but it was only a matter of time.”

The revelations highlight both historical and contemporary relations between British imperialism and Ukrainian Nazis.

The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and its paramilitary wing the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) were collaborators of the Nazis as they murdered up to 1,600,000 Jews and hundreds of thousands of members of the Red Army and Ukrainian, Polish opponents of the Nazis. The OUN/UPA is believed to have killed 25,000 Soviet servicemen, policemen and frontier guards, two-and-a-half thousand party workers, and about six hundred chairmen of collective farms and village councils, and to have massacred at least 100,000 Poles.

Yet the OUN’s founder, Stepan Bandera, is today hailed as a national hero by the far-right regime of Volodymyr Zelensky, of which the UK is a leading ally and military supplier in the proxy war against Russia.

Whatever the official claims that Blaise Metreweli, a career spy since her days at Cambridge University, had no knowledge of her grandfather’s politics and was never informed by her family or her superiors, she is the product of the fetid anti-communist milieu within British ruling circles, of which Ukrainian expat families make up an important component.

On this score, notwithstanding the *Mail* noting the supposed irony of her grandfather fighting against Britain’s then wartime ally the Soviet Union alongside the Hitler regime, there is more continuity than difference in the motivations of the Dobrowolski-Metrewelis across the generations.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact