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#WeAreTheMany
**How Britain held firm
against hatred**

Where Nazi collaborators and criminals are honoured by EU and NATO States

Dovid Katz in Vilnius looks at the development of the ‘Double Genocide’ revision of history that hurls the crimes of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia into the same pot.

BRITONS HAVE just cause for pride in their WWII struggle against Hitler and fascism. Had they not stood up to the Nazis when the rest of Europe was crumbling, fleeing, or selfishly hiding behind supposed neutrality, it is open to question whether America and others would have joined in to help save the Continent from fascist rule and the Nazis’ programme of destruction.

For some minorities, including European Jews, Roma, Sinti, and known gay people, Nazism meant rapid genocide. For Slavs and Balts, it meant the intended eradication of their countries after Nazi victory made way for a new Nazified eastern playground for the Master Race.

Little known to most people, the entire history of World War II is now being rewritten top-to-bottom by right-wing (and far-right) East European politicians and their élite associates in universities, media, the arts, literature, and museums.

Today’s East European-generated revisionist history has a number of competing names – all of which derive from its core notion that Nazi and Soviet crimes are inherently equal as a matter of sacred principle – and include “symmetry”, “equality of victimhood”, “equal evaluation of totalitarian regimes” and, most common nowadays, “double genocide”.

Double genocide is a chimera serving a number of (ultra)nationalist purposes in the Baltic states especially. Not least, it provides cover for the massive participation in the killing of the Jewish population and others (which led to the

three Baltic countries having the highest rate of murder of their Jewish populations during the Holocaust – around the 95% mark).

If these killers are heralded as anti-Soviet fighters – and to be sure, they were anti-Soviet – then fascist war criminals become heroes. This dovetails with the anti-Jewish, anti-Russian, anti-minority sentiment that held that “Those people all hoped for a Soviet victory after the Nazi invasion, so they got what they deserve”.

Collaborators glorified

In the Baltic states, revisionist history is perceived as a reliable geostrategic tool for the present and future. The argument runs: if the Soviet Union was equivalent to Hitler, and Russia is the successor state to the USSR the same way Adenauer’s Germany succeeded the Nazis, then what a big stick we have against Vladimir Putin.

In March this year, the Latvian capital, Riga, was delivered up to ceremonies honouring the country’s Waffen SS. Last year, the Estonian Parliament passed the already infamous ‘Valentine’s Day law’ (as it is called in anti-fascist circles), making way for sanitisation of *its* Waffen SS as heroes. The southern Latvian town of Bauska has also unveiled a new monument to its SS. In contrast to Western governments, the fragile Jewish community based in Riga issued a robust statement of protest.

Lithuania, which did not have a Waffen SS, is being dragged by its state apparatus into a situation even worse than honouring Hitler allies

by honouring direct killers and accomplices, including the 1941 Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF), whose white-armbanded fascist death squads murdered thousands of Jewish citizens in some 40 locations before Hitler’s hordes even arrived. When it was disbanded by the Nazis, many LAF members became voluntary Jew-shooters. There are now street names, memorial plaques and museum exhibits glorifying these fascists as “freedom fighters”.

In 2010 a Lithuanian court legalised the public display of swastikas, arguing that they are just ancient Baltic symbols. The same year the country’s parliament passed a ‘red-brown law’, in effect criminalising the opinion that the only genocide in the country was the Nazi one.

In the mid 1990s, and then again in 2012, the remains of two major local Hitlerite figures were repatriated from America (where both “heroes” fled after the war) for reburial with full honours in glittering ceremonies.

The first was the head of the LAF, Kazys Škirpa, who was kept in Berlin when the June 1941 invasion came and had to make do with vicious anti-semitic radio speeches inciting violence. And a year ago, it was the turn of the actual Nazi puppet prime minister, Juozas Ambrazevičius (later Brazaitis), who personally signed one German order for the Jews of his city, Kaunas (Kovno), to be sent to a concentration camp, and another for the remaining Jewish citizens in town to be herded into the ghetto within four weeks.

Perverting History

There is a bas relief and lecture hall named after him at Kaunas’ top university, Vytautas Magnus University, a sad irony given that Vytautas (Witold) was the grand duke whose 14th century charters of tolerance and equality exemplified the grace that made the Grand Duchy of Lithuania so great in medieval Europe.

Many of the 1941 murderers were no ordinary thugs. They knew their history. One of the LAF’s leaflets says in black and white: “The ancient right of refuge in Lithuania, granted to the Jews during the times of Vytautas the Great, is completely and finally revoked.” An equally charming leaflet offered pardon to criminals who could prove they had killed at least one Jew.

Since 2006, Lithuanian prosecutors closely associated with the far-right ‘Genocide Research Centre’ have been pursuing not Nazi war criminals, but Jewish veterans of the anti-Nazi partisans, in kangaroo “war crimes investigations”. None was ever charged with anything but all are defamed for posterity. In their late eighties or early nineties now, they still await apologies.

In Eastern Europe, it was the Soviets, in alliance with the Anglo-American allies, who were fighting Hitler between June 1941 and the war’s end. There were no British or American troops around. For the tiny percentage of Jews who survived, early escape to Russia, or later escape from the ghetto to the Soviet-supported partisans, was the only hope. The Soviet peoples



(above) Front banner of neo-Nazi march in Kaunas, Lithuania this year features the same 1941 Nazi puppet prime minister who was reburied by the state's authorities with full honours amid glittering events in 2012. Photo: *DefendingHistory.com*
 (below) reburial of Nazi puppet PM in May 2012 (arrival at Vilnius airport of remains from US)



made huge sacrifices to defeat Hitler in the east.

That is not to take anything away from the true Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian heroes of 1941: those citizens of their countries who risked themselves and their family to do the right thing and save a neighbour. They are the ones after whom streets and university lecture halls should be named, not the fascist killers and collaborators.

Every new movement has its foundation document. The constitution of Double Genocide is the so-called 2008 'Prague Declaration' that has the word *same* five times in relation to Nazi and Soviet crimes.

It demands a single mix-'n'-match day of remembrance for Nazi and Soviet crimes in all of Europe and calls for the

“overhaul of European history textbooks so that children could learn and be warned about Communism and its crimes in the same way as they have been taught to assess the Nazi crimes”.

Last year, 71 Euro-parliamentarians signed a rebuttal document, the Seventy Years Declaration (SYD), on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the January 1942 Wannsee Conference which formalised the so-called Final Solution.

Though mostly signed by MEPs and MPs affiliated to social democratic and centre-left parties, it attracted a number of liberal and conservative signatures.

Sounds of silence

Instead of polite refutation or concern at the Double Genocide movement and

its glorification of fascism, many naive westerners, particularly academic types seduced by adulation, grants, happy holidays, and medals have offered only silence and submission. On the governmental level, geostrategic concerns have been paramount in the failure of the UK and the US to rise to the occasion.

The concerns of the west, not least the perceived need for a strong anti-Putin alliance on the eastern rim of the European Union, have led the Americans, British, Canadians and others to turn a blind eye to the far-right's grip on history, ethics and human rights issues in some parts of East Europe. Russians, Roma, Jews, Gays and other

minorities are now asking: “Where on earth is this ‘West’ that we so eagerly joined?”

Then there are the UK-specific aspects. In 2009, David Cameron's Conservatives, still in opposition, and under pressure from the party's Eurosceptic wing, ditched their European Parliament (EP) alliance with the mainstream centre right EP grouping that included Sarkozy and Merkel, and went for the East European-based far right party that takes in, as Lib-Dem leader Nick Clegg correctly put it in one of the leaders' debates during the 2010 UK election campaign: “nutters, antisemites, people who deny climate change exists and homophobes”. Anyone who makes shrines to Nazi collaborators and perpetrators is by any fair definition “far right”.

Heroes of Skinheads and – EU states!

And that takes us to another practical difficulty: a new suave, silver-tongued far right that consists not just of skinheads but of diplomats and academics who know how to impress Western *naifs* enjoying their new-found East European recreation centre.

One of the first places to look for evidence is in the roster of heroes. We noted the 2012 reburial by the state of the 1941 Nazi puppet Ambrazevičius and the shrines to him in a major university. Each year since 2008, the Lithuanian government has been facilitating neo-Nazi marches in the heart of the country's major cities, Kaunas, and the beautiful capital Vilnius, on 16 February and 11 March respectively.

This year, the Kaunas marchers carried as their lead banner the image of the same 1941 Nazi puppet prime minister. When neo-nazis adore the same Hitler-era collaborator that the state is honouring with reburials and shrines, we know that something is badly wrong. ●

■ *Dovid Katz, formerly professor of Yiddish at Vilnius University, Lithuania, is editor of DefendingHistory.com.*

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