

WESTMINSTER • WHITEHALL • STORMONT • EDINBURGH • CARDIFF • EUROPE • INTERNATIONAL

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE

March 2010,
£10.00, €11.00 ISSN 2042-4167

Constitutional Reform

Jack Straw says change must be incremental, but do others agree? Dominic Grieve, David Howarth, Vernon Bogdanor and Lord Tyler debate the issues

City of Culture
The shortlist is down to four, but who will be the winner?

Digital Britain
Stephen Timms on the economic and technological benefits of innovation

Assisted Suicide
Margo Macdonald MSP defends her controversial bill

Praising Nazism
The Russian Ambassador expresses concerns about the rise of Nazi sympathisers

Stormont
Is the future really bright for Northern Ireland after the recent agreement?



GOVERNMENT GAZETTE March 2010

Lord Oakeshott on Lib Dem terms for cooperation

Edited with Infix PDF Editor
- free for non-commercial use.

To remove this notice, visit:
www.iceni.com/unlock.htm



65 years on the ghost of Nazism resurfaces across Europe

By Marcus Papadopoulos

This May marks the 65th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany, an event that symbolised the triumph of mankind and civilisation over what was depicted in Dmitry Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony as "naked evil".

The principal countries which comprised the anti-Hitler coalition — Russia, the United States, Britain and France — will hold ceremonies to celebrate the crushing of Nazism including an even larger than usual Russian military parade on Red Square on May 9 which may involve American, British and French battalions.

However, the forthcoming celebrations are being overshadowed by a dark and sinister cloud: the glorification of Nazism. The resurrection of the continent's darkest chapter by the governments of Estonia, Latvia and, up until recently, Ukraine is the vilest affront to the memory of the millions of people who either died fighting the Nazis or who were murdered in the Nazi-run concentration and extermination camps.

In recent years, the authorities in Tallinn and Riga have unashamedly permitted annual parades by Waffen-SS veterans. This grotesque spectacle involves former members of the 20th Estonian SS Division and the Latvian Legion parading in full uniform, adorned with SS insignias, in the centre of the Estonian and Latvian capitals.

These Baltic States are in the

'The resurrection of the continent's darkest chapter by the governments of Estonia, Latvia and, up until recently, Ukraine is the vilest affront'

process of rewriting the history of the Second World War. The Soviet Red Army, which liberated Estonia and Latvia from the Nazi yoke in 1944, is today portrayed by Estonian and Latvian politicians and school teachers as an "occupying force" while those who fought against the Russians in SS divisions



are regarded as "national heroes".

But that argument is a distortion of history and ignores the role played by Estonian and Latvian SS divisions in the Holocaust. In regard to the annual procession by veterans of the Latvian Legion, Dr Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Jerusalem, said: "By permitting a march to honour those who fought alongside the Nazis for a victory of the Third Reich during World War II, the Latvian authorities are sending a deeply-flawed message which distorts the historical events. And by honouring all the Latvian SS Legion veterans, even though among them are many who were active participants in the mass murder of Jews in Latvia and Belarus, the organisers of the march are insulting the victims of these murderers and reinforcing the myth that Latvians bear no responsibility whatsoever for the annihilation of Latvian Jewry."

Concerning the parades by veterans of the 20th Estonian SS Division, Dr Zuroff was equal in his condemnation. He argued: "The consistent failure of the Estonian authorities to prosecute any local Nazi war criminals ... and the continuing glorification of Estonian SS veterans ... make Estonia a leader in Holocaust distortion... Only by facing its bloody Holocaust past will Estonia ever be able to truly overcome its record of collaboration with the Nazis and the active participation of numerous Estonians in the crimes of the Shoa both in Estonia and outside its borders."

The falsification of history, however, is not just confined to speeches by politicians or chapters in school textbooks or parades by SS veterans. In 2007, the Estonian authorities sanctioned the removal of a Soviet World War Two monument, along with the graves of Red Army soldiers who died liberating Tallinn from the Nazis, from the centre of the capital.

During the Presidency of Viktor Yushchenko, Ukraine embarked on a course similar to that undertaken in Estonia and Latvia. For a country which was ravaged during the Second World War as a result of the Nazi occupation — between five and eight million Ukrainians died while over two million were deported to Germany as slave labourers — and one which was well represented in the ranks of the Red Army, Mr Yushchenko's glorification of Nazi collaborators and his attempts to present Soviet soldiers who fought the Germans as "enemies of Ukraine" was a monumental act of disrespect to the memory of the country's wartime deaths and a blatant effort to distort history.

In what was undoubtedly a final snub towards Russia before leaving office, Mr Yushchenko this January posthumously bestowed his country's highest honour — Order of Ukraine — on wartime Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera, leader of the Organisation for Ukrainian Nationalists which murdered thousands of Jews and Poles as well as organising resistance to the Soviet army.

Stepan Bandera's collaboration with the Nazis is substantively documented as is his role in the murdering of Jews. One example of Bandera's anti-Semitism and his resolve to eliminate Ukrainian Jews can be found in two quotes. Firstly, Bandera argued that: "The Jews are the most faithful prop of the Bolshevik regime and the vanguard of Muscovite imperialism in Ukraine... The OUN is engaged with a struggle with the Jews."

The second quote is from Yaroslav Stetsko, head of the Ukrainian government which was proclaimed following the German invasion of the Soviet Union and supported by Bandera: "We are of the opinion

Continued on page 44

Nazi support is on the rise

continued from p43

that a struggle against the Jews of Ukraine should be undertaken according to German methods, and so I am firm in my view that the Jews must be annihilated completely, and the German methods for liquidating the Jews should be brought to Ukraine."

The glorification of Nazism is the ultimate offence to all who died at the hands of the Nazis but in particular to the six million victims of the Holocaust and the 28 million Soviet people who perished in the war. However, it is also helping to increase anti-Semitism and is creating serious strains between the governments of Russia on the one hand and Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine on the other. It should be noted, however, that with the recent election of Viktor Yanukovich as President of Ukraine, the period of elevating Nazi collaborators to hero status in this former Soviet republic has come to an end.

During an interview in the residence of the Russian Ambassador to the Court of St James's, Yury Viktorovich Fedotov told this writer that his government views "very negatively" what is occurring in Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine and considers that such behaviour is "unacceptable in a civilised world".

Speaking on behalf of a country

'Western leaders should think carefully about what their peoples fought for during the war'

which bore the brunt of the Nazi war machine and which was responsible for more than 80 per cent of the German military's overall wartime losses, Ambassador Fedotov said that the Russian government cannot and will not "accept" the glorification of Nazi veterans as these people participated in "crimes against humanity".

He argued that: "No one is allowed to rewrite the history of the Second World War. The Nuremberg Tribunal clearly defined the SS as a criminal organisation. These acts [in Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine] have no justification."

When asked about the case concerning Stepan Bandera, the Russian ambassador averred that the Ukrainian nationalist leader and his troops had carried out the "mass extermination" of Russians, Byelorussians, Poles and Jews and



that this had been "determined" by the Nuremberg Tribunal.

The Russian government, according to the ambassador, has noticed a "trend" in these newly independent states in which they create a national identity based on anti-Russian



sentiments. "These countries may need to revisit their history but this should not be done at the expense of their relations with their neighbours, including Russia", Ambassador Fedotov contended.

The failure of the United States and the European Union to adopt a tough stance towards countries glorifying Nazism was put to Ambassador Fedotov, including how the US and EU states refused to support a resolution passed last year by the United Nations General Assembly which condemned what is occurring in Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine.

He commented that although the Americans and the Europeans have sent signals to these states expressing "concern", these have, nevertheless, been "too mild and too polite" and he added that Wash-

ington and Brussels need to formulate their position in "a more principled way".

Staying on the subject of the West's response towards states praising Nazism, Ambassador Fedotov agreed with this writer that it is indeed ironic that the American and British governments are preparing to celebrate the 65th anniversary of Nazi Germany's defeat but are at the same time failing to vigorously condemn attempts to glorify war criminals. However, he noted that by having invited American, British and French troops to take part in the Victory Day parade this May in Moscow, the Russian government hopes that by remembering all who died in the war, this will "prevent other people from rewriting the war's history".

"History cannot be rewritten; history must be honoured; and all attempts to glorify those who committed crimes during the war must stop", was part of Ambassador Fedotov's closing remark in the interview. The Russian government, he said, will continue to reply "strongly and negatively" to the rewriting of history and the glorification of Nazism.

By turning a blind eye to what is occurring in Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine — as a result of the geo-strategic importance attached to them by Western foreign-policy-makers — Washington and Brussels are not only unwittingly helping to increase anti-Semitism but are also forgetting just how close mankind and civilisation came to being destroyed by the Nazis.

When marking the defeat of Hitler this May, Western leaders should think carefully about what their peoples fought for during the war; and they should never forget the human toll incurred as a result of Nazism.