

State-Sponsored Collective Memory Revisionism:

*A 21st Century Incarnation of Holocaust
Denial?*

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27 May 2013

PRESENTATION AT THE RIGA GHETTO AND LATVIAN HOLOCAUST
MUSEUM / SHAMIR/ BITC CONFERENCE IN RIGA, LATVIA

Important Clarification

- Critiques of one set of policies of certain governments and elites are in no way a statement about the people of a country or about their government and elites in general!

Evolution of Holocaust Denial

- Classic Denial
- The Lipstadt-Irving Trial
- The Emergence of the “New Denial” in Post-Soviet “Nationalist Eastern Europe”:
- Straight Denial neither possible nor necessary; replaced by: Holocaust Obfuscation.
- An “Eastern Agenda”: Anti-Russian, anti-Jewish, ultranationalist.

“Red Equals Brown”

- Attempts to write the Holocaust out of history as unique event by:
 - (a) claiming Nazi and Soviet crimes to be equal in principle ('reconciliation of histories' etc in Eurospeak);
 - (b) finding fault with victims and survivors;
 - (c) glorifying local collaborators and perpetrators as anti-Soviet heroes and freedom fighters;
 - (d) spreading a revisionist narrative combined with genuine education and research in history.

The Mechanisms

- (a) incorporating (often serious) Holocaust Studies into Red-Brown institutions (the three Baltic commissions, etc)
- (b) redefining 'genocide' by law to encompass Soviet crimes
- (c) refining antisemitic discourse into academic frameworks
- (d) awarding medals, honors, junkets, grants to fellow-travelers
- (e) criminalizing the Western view of World War II
 - and

Giving “Double Genocide” its “Constitution” . . .

- The Prague
Declaration of 2008

5 Times

The Prague Declaration of 2008 has the word

“same”

five times

The Motives

- (a) Ultranationalism: desire to have a national history with no blemishes (doesn't exist!) and to glorify all 'anti-Soviets' (including killers of 1941...)
- (b) Anti-Russian, anti-Jewish, anti-minority sentiments
- (c) A vision of countering the REAL possible threats of Putinism and a future unstable Russia with...
“Double Genocide” (history for foreign policy)
- (d) The convoluted logic...

Museums and Memorials in
any Country are Part of a
Wider Narrative

Prof. & MEP Leonidas Donskis:

“It is impossible to pursue two mutually exclusive political goals maintaining two packages which are impossible to reconcile. We cannot sympathize with both victims and perpetrators.”

Museums & Memorials in
Eastern Europe to...
THE COLLABORATORS

Lonsky Street Museum in Lviv



Before Photoshopping:



In the Eastern
EUROPEAN UNION

Estonia: Lihula Monument



Latvia: Bauska Monument



Latvia: March 16th Waffen SS March in Central Riga

Gert Weisskirchen Protesting...



Lithuania: Conceptually Further...

- Public honors not only for partners in Hitler's military warfare against the Allies (/USSR), but for actual Holocaust collaborators and perpetrators complicit in the genocide of Lithuanian Jewry in the period from 23 June 1941 onward.
- LAF, white armbanders and other perpetrators.
- The Provisional Nazi puppet government of 1941.

Street Names for Collaborators



Street Names for Perpetrators



Street Names for 23 June 1941



From the 'Museum of Genocide Victims' in Vilnius:

On 22 June 1941, in the first hours of the German–USSR war, the German army (Wehrmacht) entered the territory of Lithuania and within 7–8 days occupied the whole country. On the first day of the war, an uprising organised by the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) against the Soviet occupational rule, which was introduced in summer 1940, started in Lithuania. The goal of the LAF was to restore the independent Lithuanian state. On 24 June 1941, Wehrmacht units that entered Kaunas and Vilnius found restored and operating Lithuanian authorities. However, Nazi German authorities did not recognise either the Lithuanian provisional government formed during the June 1941 uprising and led by Juozas Ambrazevičius or the restoration of the Lithuanian state announced by the provisional government. On 5 August 1941, Nazi authorities stopped the activities of the Lithuanian provisional government, and on 26 September they prohibited the LAF.

Following the occupation of Lithuania, the Germans announced that Lithuania was now incorporated

Antisemitic exhibits without curatorial comment



Local face of “Double Genocide”:

**"(In Auschwitz) we were given
some spinach and a little
bread... War is terrible, but
famine is even worse."**

**Maria Khutorianska
Eyewitness to the Holodomor
Zhytomyr region**

2012 Reburial of 1941 Nazi Puppet Prime Minister



University Lecture Hall Name




And.... Neo-Nazis' front banner



The 'Unknown Juxtaposition'


State authorities and neo-Nazis honoring the same Holocaust perpetrator... A new far right that poses as centre-right?

June 2008: Legal ban on Nazi and Soviet symbols....

 **LIVE L** BBC NEWS CHANNEL

Page last updated at 17:23 GMT, Tuesday, 17 June 2008 18:23 UK

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Lithuanian ban on Soviet symbols

Lithuania's parliament has passed the toughest restrictions anywhere in the former Soviet Union on the public display of Soviet and Nazi symbols.

It will now be an offence in the Baltic state to display the images of Soviet and Nazi leaders.



June 2010

- Passage of Europe's first two 'red-brown criminalization of debate' laws: in Hungary and Lithuania.

Also in June 2010: Court's
legalization of just 'one' fascist
symbol . .



March 2013: Central Vilnius



Extremes of the Double Genocide Movement

- Campaigns of defamation against Holocaust survivors:
- (1) Yitzhak Arad
- (2) Dr. Rachel Margolis
- (3) Ms. Fania Yocheles Brantsovsky
- (4) Professor Sara Ginaite
- (5) Attorney Joseph Melamed
-

Popular local forms of
the revisionist far-right
history...

AČIŲ UŽ MŪSŲ PERGALE



Counter-Measures ...

- 1. Holocaust survivors' groups
- 2. UK and European Union elected officials
- 3. Supporting LOCAL people who speak up with courage (see page on BOLD CITIZENS in Lithuania)
- 4. The Seventy Years Declaration (2012)
- 5. Websites:
 - www.DefendingHistory.com
 - [www.OperationLast Chance.org](http://www.OperationLastChance.org)
 - www.lithuanianjews.org
 - <http://stop16marchinriga.blogspot.com>

The Future:

- **Understanding the 21st century debate.** Defending History against state-sponsored far-right revisionism, even when it 'koshers' itself with Judaic, Yiddish or Holocaust related activities . . .
- Remembering that monuments and events have a ***different meaning in the context*** of wider revisionist campaigns that 'remember everyone equally' . . .

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING
QUESTIONS WELCOME

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