



Russian-Ukrainian Antagonism Spreads to History

OE Watch Commentary: World War II memorials have served to deepen the antagonism between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. A recent commemorative ceremony in Berlin became the subject of an open conflict as reflected in the accompanying excerpts from the pro-Kremlin *Izvestia*.

The first excerpt describes the reaction of the Ukrainian Ambassador to Germany, Andrei Mel'nik, to an invitation from Berlin, to participate in a ceremony dedicated to Soviet soldiers fallen in WW II. The invitation for the ceremony to be held at the site of the Wehrmacht surrender on 2 May 1945, was also extended to representatives of Russia and Belarus. The Ambassador refused to attend, stating that it was his moral obligation to honor the memory of war victims, but could not imagine doing so with Russian representatives "even in his worst dream." He stated that the Ukrainian contribution to the war was being minimized and that Russia was seeking to claim sole credit for the victory. The article also points out that Mel'nik "blamed Moscow for the troubles of Ukraine and for the situation in the south east of the country."



Wreath of honor to celebrate at the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin-Treptow.

Source: By Bernd.Brincken - Own work via Wikimedia, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=11222509>, CC BY-SA 3.0

The next day, *Izvestia* covered the response of Russian Senator Aleksei Pushkov to the Ukrainian Ambassador's refusal to participate in the wreath-laying ceremony. As the second excerpt points out, Pushkov posted on Twitter that the Ukrainian refusal was "just the next demonstration of contempt from the side of the Kievan elite." **End OE Watch Commentary (Byrne)**

“He said that to honor the memory of the victims of the war is his moral obligation, yet “even in his worst dream” he could not imagine laying wreaths with the Russian representative...”

Source: “Посол Украины в Берлине отказался возлагать цветы с послом России (Ukrainian Ambassador Refused to Lay Flowers with the Ambassador of Russia,” *Izvestia*, 2 May 2020. <https://iz.ru/1006979/2020-05-02/posol-ukrainy-v-berline-otkazalsia-vozlagnat-tsvety-s-poslom-rossii>

Ambassador of Ukraine to Germany Andrei Mel'nik refused to take part in a flower-laying ceremony to fallen Soviet soldiers due to the presence of Russian Ambassador Sergei Nachaev, writes the newspaper Tagesspiegel.

According to the edition, the Ukrainian diplomat received an invitation from Berlin along with the Russian and Belarussian diplomatic missions to a dedication to the 75th anniversary of the Victory over fascism and the capitulation of the Wehrmacht.

Only Mel'nik refused. According to him, the role of Ukrainian in the battle with the Nazis is underestimated as if the Soviet Red Army could be considered Russian. He said that to honor the memory of the victims of the war is his moral obligation, yet “even in his worst dream” he could not imagine laying wreaths with the Russian representative. He again blamed Moscow for the troubles of Ukraine and for the situation in the south-east of the country.

Source: “Пушков оценил отказ посла Украины от участия в церемонии в Берлине (Pushkov Evaluates the Refusal of the Ukrainian Ambassador to Participate in Ceremony in Berlin),” *Izvestia*, 3 May 2020. <https://iz.ru/1007240/2020-05-03/pushkov-otcenil-otkaz-posla-ukrainy-ot-uchastiia-v-tceremonii-v-berline>

Pushkov Evaluated the Refusal of the Ukrainian Ambassador to Participate in Berlin Ceremony

Russian Senator Aleksei Pushkov called the refusal of the Ukrainian ambassador Andrei Mel'kina to lay a wreath together with the Russian ambassador in honor of the 75th anniversary of the capitulation of the Wehrmacht a demonstration of hatred.

According to Pushkov, nothing else was to be expected from the Ukrainian government. “I don't think that the refusal of the ambassador of Ukraine to lay a wreath together with the ambassador of Russia, which is widely reported- is newsworthy. Who expected otherwise? It is just the next demonstration of contempt from the side of the Kievan elite. The place for this information is “petty facts”. Nothing more”, -wrote the senator of Twitter on May 2nd.