It’s hard to underestimate how the events of World War II still affect the world we live in today. Children from all over the world, especially those from Europe, learn details of this unprecedented conflict and the role their country played in it from school books, relatives and TV programs at an early age. However, it’s truly unfortunate that only a few people would ever take care to pay closer attention to the history of other countries, notes Norwegia’s Forskning.

Researchers say that it is impossible to accurately assess which state made the greatest commitment to the fight against fascism. However, it’s indisputable that the number of people that lost their lives in the process can be described as a telling indicator of such a commitment. In this regard, there’s those who still don’t know that the USSR had lost some 27 million people during the war, both in terms of civilian and military casualties. For the sake of comparison it must be noted that the United States has lost no more than 420,000 servicemen in total, both in the Pacific and Europe. In turn, Germany, the principal aggressor, lost some 5.5 million soldiers.

However, in light of today’s political situation where collective national narcissism firmly occupies the geopolitical stage, people tend to look favorably at the feats of the group they belong to, neglecting the achievements of others. This has been particularly true when evaluating the Second World War, where the US contribution to the allied victory over fascism is touted all across the Western world, while the contribution made by the USSR remains
A number of countries have even started rewriting the history of World War II to please the ruling elites in the West. Many Polish politicians are now officially refusing to celebrate the important milestone in the fight against fascism that was the liberation of their country by the Red Army at the end of World War II. In particular, the decision to not celebrate the liberation of Warsaw by Soviet troops during the Soviet Warsaw-Poznan operation has recently been made by current, short-sighted high-profile politicians of this country, aimed at pleasing Washington with a clear manifestation of their Russophobia. At the same time, no political force in Poland is willing to discuss these days that while the ousted Polish government in London was trying to play mind games, the Red Army repelled crushing counterattacks of a total of three fascist tank divisions near Warsaw, while finding the resolve to provide food and weapons to the Polish resistance, although the population of the Soviet Union was on the brink of starvation. Some 600,000 Soviet soldiers sacrificed their lives in the battle for Poland!

In addition, one can hardly forget that among the records regarding the burials of Soviet soldiers, prisoners of war and civilians who died during the Second World War published in 2003, there’s some 2.2 million Soviet citizens buried in Poland – the victims of that despicable war. Reading the introduction prefacing these records penned by Andrzej Pszewoznik, one cannot help but feel terrified at how in less than two decades the ruling Polish elites did away with Christian values in exchange for Russophobic hatred.

And now, as the Latvian channel PRESS.LV emphasizes, Poland is now destroying the monuments built in honor of the Red Army soldiers fighting hand-in-hand with the Polish resistance against the Nazis, while trying to whitewash the fact that the entire Ukrainian population of Warsaw was massacred by Polish Nazi collaborators together with the remnants of the Jews that the Germans did not have time to murder during their retreat.

Against this backdrop, it’s hardly a surprise that Warsaw has recently adopted a law prohibiting any mention of Polish involvement in the Holocaust, in a bid to escape even partial responsibility for the events of World War II. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Jerusalem Holocaust Remembrance Center and the Israeli Foreign Ministry would urge the sitting Polish government to change the provisions of the law, emphasizing that one cannot change historical truth, as it is unacceptable to neglect the pain of the families of Holocaust survivors. Warsaw’s decision to make even the mention of Poland’s role in those despicable crimes against humanity known as the Holocaust a criminal offence was criticized by both Israel and the United States.

Sadly, attempts to distort the historical truth of the Second World War will not stop. As the heirs of Nazi accomplices pursue this shameful goal they are now being joined by a number of respectable international institutions, including the European Parliament, which adopted a misleading resolution regarding the causes of World War II, deliberately distorting historical facts for the sake of today’s political agenda last September.

However, in spite of a number of Western political figures making similar attempts to distort historical facts in the wake of Russophobic hysteria, there’s those who are still committed to commemorating the victims of fascism and those heroes that valiantly defeated it during the dark days of World War II.

That is why objective and sober-minded politicians showed genuine interest in the international Holocaust remembrance forum held on January 22-23 in Jerusalem, which has become one of the largest international events in the history of Israel. This event was jointly organized by the office of Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, the Jerusalem Memorial Center Yad Vashem and the World Holocaust Forum Foundation, which was founded by a philanthropist from Moscow, Vyacheslav Kantor.

The event would bring together more than 60 delegations from all across the world, including 45 heads of states together with speakers of national parliaments.

Against this background, the refusal to honor this event voiced by the presidents of Poland, Lithuania and the leaders of neighboring Baltic states is truly revealing.

According to the opinion published by the Lithuanian publication Delfi.lt, it is quite possible that the Lithuanian leader Gitanas Nausėda decided not to go to Israel to avoid the mention of Lithuanian collaborators who were slaughtering Jews during the Second World War.

But it is also possible that he did not want to meet face-to-face with the protesters gathered by the Association of Lithuanian Jews by the Lithuanian Embassy in Israel, who are protesting against an anti-Semitic bill prepared by the Lithuanian parliament last December which claims that Vilnius had nothing to do with the Holocaust. The President of the Conference of European Rabbis, Pinchas Goldschmidt voiced his vocal criticism of this bill, recalling that
during the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, the provisional government was involved in the killing of more than 90% of the Jewish population of this country, some 220,000 Jews in total.

Although, it is quite possible that the Polish leader had precisely the same reasons for his refusal to come to Jerusalem, especially against the backdrop of Moscow declassifying a large number of historic documents in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz which revealed that Polish nationals were employed in that camp and involved in sadistic cruelty against its prisoners.

*Vladimir Odintsov, expert politologist, exclusively for the online magazine ‘New Eastern Outlook’.*