

and France. The latest position of the new French government was clearly expressed by Defense Minister Léotard on April 20, after his return from talks in London. Léotard spoke out against lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia and Croatia, and ruled out air strikes as "ridiculous" and "absurd."

The British position is to delay air strikes as long as possible, and thus make them meaningless when and if they occur. Beyond that, the British, like the French, insist upon the precondition of withdrawing U.N. forces first, before air strikes begin, thus giving the Serbs an "early warning system."

Statements by leading British figures over the April 17-18 weekend document this. Sir Nicholas Bronsor, Tory chairman of the Parliament's Defense Select Committee, declared in response to Lord David Owen's qualified call for air strikes: "Lord Owen is not right to call for the bombing of the Serbs. It is not a one-sided conflict. The Croats and Muslims are also guilty of ethnic cleansing. However there may be a point where we have to change tack, but that would mean the end of humanitarian aid. It would have to be a joint decision, with everyone going in, following the Americans. But we would have to withdraw troops first [meaning, among others, the British troops assigned to the U.N. in Bosnia], as they would be slaughtered."

Bonsor's "fight" with Owen has less to it than initially meets the eye. He demanded that before any air strikes, the Russians would have to agree to such a course of action. Owen, after his well-publicized call for air strikes, sang a similar tune: "We have to be thinking in terms of going to the Security Council [meaning an agreement with Russia and France] and taking the necessary measures to pressure them [the Serbs] and that would include military measures, and I think these measures would be the interdiction of supply lines."

U.S. policy must be a combination of air strikes now against vital Serbian targets, combined with a broader strategy that could easily neutralize the often-cited "Russian problem" that supposedly stands in the way of doing anything serious against Serbia. Clinton must accept the Russian proposal for American-Russian anti-missile defense cooperation, put forward by President Yeltsin at the Vancouver summit on April 3-4. By committing America to support Russia's, and indeed America's own, most vital strategic interests in this way, he can readily get Russian agreement to help stop Serbia. Compared to the prospects of mutually rewarding strategic defense and high-technology cooperation with America, Serbia counts for little in Russian strategic thinking. For Bosnia, however, time has all but run out.

As a postscript, another Russian initiative ought to be endorsed immediately by President Clinton, with a proviso. This is the proposal of Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozirev for all U.N. Security Council foreign ministers plus leading European foreign ministers to meet in either Sarajevo or Srebrenica to work out a solution. The proviso is that the ministers not be permitted to leave Sarajevo or Srebrenica until that solution is reached.

Wiesenthal defends Serbian crimes

by Mark Burdman

Austria's renowned "Nazi-hunter" Simon Wiesenthal has seen his better days. In 1988, Wiesenthal had taken the positive step of signing a policy statement, distributed by the Club of Life, denouncing the present-day practice of euthanasia as identical to the policies of the Nazis. He did this with full knowledge that he was endorsing an initiative of Helga Zepp-LaRouche, wife of Lyndon LaRouche, who were then being anathemized throughout the world by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL). During the late 1980s, Wiesenthal had frequently criticized the U.S. Justice Department and World Jewish Congress witchhunt against former Austrian President Kurt Waldheim. He also appeared to distance himself from some of the campaigns of the institute bearing his name in California, which targeted eastern European-origin octogenarians living in the United States, Britain, and other countries who were accused, often on the basis of evidence provided by the Soviet authorities, of Nazi war crimes.

But now, for reasons that are not clear, Wiesenthal has thrown his weight behind a campaign of certain Russians, the Israelis, and their friends in the ADL to justify the crimes of the Serbs. He is also echoing Russian propaganda vis-à-vis the Baltics and Ukraine, as if to justify a Russian strategic move against these nations.

With his pro-Serbian views, Wiesenthal has aligned himself with a faction within Jewish organizations typified by California's Herb Brin, whose ADL-mouthpiece *Southwest Jewish Heritage* weekly has become an open advocate of the Serbian cause. Brin has traveled to Belgrade to propagandize for Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic. At the same time, Wiesenthal is in public opposition to an important counter-current among Jewish spokesmen, exemplified by those who have drawn the parallel between the current slaughter of the Bosnians and what was done to the Jews by the Nazis. The sole remaining commander of the Jewish Warsaw Ghetto uprising against the Nazis, Dr. Marek Edelman, declared on April 18, on the 50th anniversary commemoration in Poland of the launching of that resistance: "There is mass extermination taking place in Bosnia, and Europe is behaving in a similar way as it did vis-à-vis the ghetto fighters. . . . Sadly, the Holocaust did not stop with the ghetto. It goes on."

Wiesenthal spoke out on the Serbia question in an April 1 interview with the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*. It was on that very day that a Bosnian government suit was introduced before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, charging the Serbs with genocide. Wiesenthal told *Corriere* that it would be impossible to hold a Nuremberg-style tribunal for crimes committed in former Yugoslavia, because “from a military point of view, this is a civil war,” and because if there are Serbian war criminals, there are also Croatian war criminals, as well as Bosnians who have committed atrocities.

Big lies

The interview was headlined with a quote from Wiesenthal denouncing the “fascist Ustashe” ostensibly ruling in Croatia today, “Ustashe” being a reference to the Nazi-backed regime which ruled Croatia in the 1941-45 period. The repeated “Big Lie” in the interview was to make a simplistic and historically absurd equivalence between the early 1940s and today, to the effect that “Croats were fascists then and now,” “Germans were Nazis then and now,” *ad nauseam*.

Wiesenthal aligned himself with the British-authored “Germany is the Fourth Reich” propaganda, saying that it was a “very big mistake for the whole world” that Croatia and Slovenia were recognized as early as they were, but that “that was pushed by Germany and Austria.” Asked, “If Serbia is a Bolshevik state, is Croatia to be defined as a fascist state?” Wiesenthal responded: “Exactly. It is enough to read the anti-Semitic writings of President Franjo Tudjman to be convinced of that. Is it not the case that Israel has refused to have diplomatic relations with Croatia? There is no Israeli embassy in Zagreb. It is also the case that Germany, Austria, and the Vatican were the first to recognize the independence of Croatia. . . . I am worried that Croatia will transform itself into a satellite of Germany, like the Serbs today depend again on Russia.” Yet he demurred from the characterization of Serbia as “Bolshevik,” insisting that one can not expect a state that has been communist, to become “in one shot, democratic.”

Wiesenthal even argued that the Serbs, not the Croats nor Bosnians nor Kosova Albanians, were the first victims of the breakup of Yugoslavia: “We know of the crimes of the Serbs in Bosnia. But we forget that the first refugees of the war were Serbs; 40,000 were forced to leave Croatia, when on Dec. 22, 1990 this country decided to proclaim that the Serbs were an ethnic minority. This shows that the Croats were the first, before the Serbs, to evince an exaggerated nationalism. . . . The synagogues and Orthodox churches [in Croatia] were set on fire, a Jewish cemetery was profaned.”

This is pure falsification. All experts on the Balkans know that the origin of the conflict, in its contemporary manifestation, was in 1981, when the Serbs initiated a brutal crack-down against Albanians in Kosova, thereby signaling their

aggressive intentions toward other groups. By 1986, the coming breakup of Yugoslavia and the Serbian war of aggression became foregone conclusions to insiders in then-Yugoslavia, when the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences released a policy document, authored by its chief ideologue Dobrica Cosic (today President of rump “Yugoslavia”) recommending that the Serbian elites drop their Titoist-Bolshevik commitments, and instead promote a “Greater Serbia” ideology. It was Cosic and his Serbian Academy colleagues who sponsored the rise to power of Milosevic, whose Greater Serbia ravings in the late 1980s sent the message to Croats, Bosnians, Kosovans, etc., that coexistence with Serbia was becoming impossible. Once the dynamics toward a split became far advanced by mid-1990, it was the *Serbian* militias in Croatia under the late Jovan Raskovic, rather than the Croats, who began to commit atrocities.

These elementary facts would all be known to a well-informed Austrian like Simon Wiesenthal, especially as the Serbian elites’ ideology and propaganda since the early 1980s has been justifiably likened to that of the Nazis. So why does he propagate such lies?

Wiesenthal compounded this painful pattern with an interview with the Russian weekly *New Times*. In its April 1993 edition, the magazine featured an interview with “the well-known hunter for Nazis, [who] talks about the situation in the Baltic states and Ukraine.” Wiesenthal talked about only those aspects that the Russians want publicized now. Journalist Anatoly Kovrigin asked, “Dr. Wiesenthal, I’m aware that you are deeply concerned about the fact that the upsurge of nationalism in the Baltic states and Ukraine resulted in rehabilitation of Nazi criminals. What activities do you undertake in this connection?” Wiesenthal jumped on the leading question, complaining about Lithuanian authorities’ refusal to cooperate with him in tracking down alleged Nazi collaborators.

Later, Wiesenthal was asked another leading question, “Why has rehabilitation of the criminal past become possible in the Baltic states?” He responded: “This is one of the manifestations of nationalist tendencies in the three Baltic states. . . . Generally speaking, I’m worried by the clear outburst of racism and fascism on the territory of the former U.S.S.R.”

Wiesenthal self-righteously proclaimed that he would refuse to visit Kiev, capital of Ukraine, because “I can’t afford taking part in falsifying history.”

Such statements should not be seen in a “Jewish” context of professed hatred for Nazi crimes. Rather, they should be seen as part of a growing trend among certain western influentials, to “signal” that a Russian revanchist push into these parts of the former Soviet Union would be tolerated, as a response to what the Russians are claiming are “violations of rights of ethnic Russians” living there. Wiesenthal, in this sense, is only one of several prominent individuals who are playing with fire in the Baltics and Ukraine. But that hardly excuses Wiesenthal, who should know better.