

Fight to honour heroes who killed top Nazi

David Charter Berlin

In one of the most daring raids of the Second World War Jozef Gabcik and Jan Kubis killed a right-hand man of Hitler before they were betrayed and hunted down by the SS.

Now a campaign has begun to find the remains of the Czechoslovak patriots, who parachuted into their homeland from Britain to track and kill Reinhard Heydrich, the most senior Nazi to be assassinated during the war, in an early triumph for the Special Operations Executive, the forerunner of MI6.

Gabcik, a Slovak, and Kubis, born in Moravia in the present-day Czech Republic, were best friends who fled the Nazi takeover to train as Free Czechoslovak paratroopers at Cholmondeley Castle in Cheshire.

Heydrich controlled occupied Bohemia and Moravia, and was a key organiser of the Holocaust.

Dropped in with a team of resistance fighters, the pair launched their attack on Heydrich in Prague in May 1942 at a hairpin bend on his daily journey to Prague Castle. The mission, known as Operation Anthropoid, is the subject of a film called *Anthropoid*, released next month starring Cillian Murphy as Gabcik and Jamie Dornan as Kubis.

Gabcik stepped out in front of Heydrich's open-topped Mercedes but his Sten gun jammed. Just as Heydrich stood up to shoot Gabcik, Kubis threw a grenade that exploded outside the car, wounding Heydrich, who collapsed as he chased the assassins. Heydrich died



Reinhard Heydrich was killed by, right, Jan Kubis and, below, Jozef Gabcik. The pair are played in the film *Anthropoid*, above, by Jamie Dornan and Cillian Murphy



eight days later and Hitler ordered bloody reprisals including the razing of several villages while Heinrich Himmler's SS hunted the attackers.

They were betrayed by a resistance comrade for one million marks, surrounded in a Prague church where Gabcik was fatally wounded and Kubis committed suicide rather than be caught after a six-hour gun battle.

Dozens of resistance sympathisers were rounded up and killed.

Karel Curda, who betrayed them, was found guilty of high treason after the war in 1947 and hanged. His body was placed in the same mass grave as Gabcik and Kubis in Dablice cemetery in northern Prague.

The bodies of Gabcik and Kubis were thrown into a mass grave. Campaigners now want them exhumed and their reburial with full national honours as part of a programme to identify and commemorate the thousands of remains in burial grounds used by Nazi and Communist regimes to dispose of their opponents up until the 1960s.

Neela Winkelmann, head of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience group, said: "We want to give a dignified burial to the heroes of the anti-Nazi and anti-Communist resistance. We seem to be facing opposition in the ministries with costs being used as an easy excuse for not dealing with the issue. Some people do not want these old issues to be opened up."

Jana Zechmeisterova, of the Czech defence ministry, said: "The intention to exhume and identify bodies from Dablice cemetery is in its initial phase."

British Jews 'are right to be worried'

Gabriella Swerling

A world-renowned Israeli historian of the Holocaust who is an expert on anti-semitism has said that "if I were a British Jew, I would be worried".

Yehuda Bauer, 90, an academic adviser to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, said that Ken Livingstone was a "violent anti-semitic", and that Jeremy Corbyn "has a problem".

Community Security Trust, a Jewish anti-racist charity, this month reported an increase in antisemitic incidents in the UK, with 557 cases of malicious acts from January to June — 11 per cent up on the same period last year.

Asked whether Jewish people had a right to feel concerned, Professor Bauer replied: "Yes. If I were a British Jew, I certainly would be worried by it. I mean, after all, they are being attacked one way or the other."

He said that research in Israel had found that threats made verbally or on social media worldwide had fallen, but the violence of them had increased.

"There are more violent incidents, therefore if I were a British Jew, the concern would certainly be there, because of that increasing violence," he said.

Professor Bauer is being brought to the UK by Yachad, a charity that campaigns for a political resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and will be discussing a range of issues with Tulip Siddiq, MP, in London on September 6.



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