



Deputy Chief Minister

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Understanding Self Determination in a Post World War Europe Symposium at the Gibraltar Garrison Library 22nd - 23rd October 2015

A symposium entitled “Understanding Self Determination in a Post World War Europe” will be opened by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia at the Garrison Library on Thursday at 10:00am. The event has been organised by Dr Jennifer Ballantine-Perera, Director of the Garrison Library, together with the Office of the Deputy Chief Minister.

This year’s symposium sets out to engage with questions that relate to the Second World War and the impact this was to have on the redistribution of power and on subsequent global policies pertaining to human rights, self-determination and decolonisation. These are topical issues given that 2015 has marked not only 70 years since VE Day signalled the end of the war in Europe, but also the 75th anniversary of the evacuation of the Gibraltar’s civilian population during the War.

The end of the 1939-1945 war was certainly to mark a new era. For the repatriated Gibraltarian evacuees this meant the return to their homeland with the start of new lives informed by their experiences abroad and by the constitutional steps being taken locally in the development of educational and governmental institutions. On a global scale, the hard lessons learned during the war led to the setting up of structures and international policies to prevent another world war ever occurring again. The United Nations, established on October 24th 1945, took over from the ineffective League of Nations, setting the benchmark for peace, international cooperation and diplomacy. The initiatives established by the UN have clearly had a lasting legacy. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December 1948, arose directly from the experience of the Second World War. The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (United Nations Resolution 1514), passed by the UN General Assembly in 1960, was a significant move towards cementing the rights of individuals and nations stating that “all people have a right to self-determination”.

These core themes will be explored during the two day symposium. Historical contexts of the war and the immediate post-war years will be discussed during the first day’s session with presentations including an analysis of the post-war decline of the British Empire; the evacuation of the civilian population, Gibraltar as a wartime fortress; and the moves being made towards

political reform and self-determination by the returning Gibraltarians. Day two shall be dedicated to the post-war years with the establishment of the UN. Presentations will include discussions on the declaration of human rights and on policies of decolonisation and self-determination across a number of examples and territories.

A panel from different countries composed of academics, jurists and other parties relevant to the discussions will elaborate on the themes of the conference. The full list of speakers will be published later this week.

The symposium will take place on Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd October with the morning sessions starting at 10:00am and the afternoon sessions at 2:30pm. This event is open to the general public free of charge and those wishing to attend are requested to contact the Garrison Library to register.