

## **Lithuanian formin calls group of socdems' decision to sign declaration against equation of Nazi, Soviet crimes "pathetic"**

VILNIUS, Jan 21, BNS – Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Audronius Azubalis has called the decision by a group of social democrats, members of the Lithuanian and European Parliaments, to sign a declaration objecting to the equation of Nazi and Soviet crimes "pathetic", according to margarita Butkiene, spokeswoman to the minister.

"It's pathetic that Lithuanian social democrats are taking political steps in the opposite direction to where the whole Europe is going," she said.

Dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Final Solution Conference at Wannsee in 1942, when the Nazi leadership formally adopted the "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem", the declaration was signed by eight members of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party.

The declaration rejects attempts to diminish the Holocaust by deeming it to be "equal, similar or equivalent to Communism."

According to the ministry's statement, such a statement conflicts with the 2009 European Parliament's resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism, suggesting declaring August 23 the Day of Remembrance of All Victims of Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes, as well as the 2009 Resolution on Divided Europe Reunited: Promoting Human Rights and Civil Liberties in the OSCE Region in the 21st Century, adopted by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and condemning both XX century regimes – Nazi and Soviet.

"In essence the social democratic rhetoric mimics the Kremlin's position that Stalin was "good" and Hitler was "bad". The only difference one could find between Hitler and Stalin is their moustache (Hitler's were shorter). Followers of both regimes – communists and Nazis – were united by their hatred of democracy. The legal qualification of crimes they committed is absolutely the same: these are war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity," Butkiene expressed the foreign affairs

minister's opinion.

Signatories to the document object to attempts to have European history school books rewritten to reflect the notion of "Double Genocide" ("equality" or "sameness" of Nazi and Soviet crimes), attempts to legalize or sanitize the public display of the swastika by racist and fascist groups, as well as efforts to have the Holocaust remembered on one common day with the victims of Communism.

Lithuania also actively contributed to the preparation of a resolution, adopted by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) during the parliamentary assembly in 2009, which, contrary to the Seventy Years Declaration, equates Nazi and Stalinism crimes. Initiated by Lithuanian and Slovenian MPs, the resolution also backs an initiative to declare August 23, when the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact was signed, a common day of remembrance of Stalinism and Nazism victims.

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### **Group of Lithuanian social democrats sign declaration against equation of Nazi, Soviet crimes**

VILNIUS, Jan 20, BNS – A group of social democrats, members of the Lithuanian and European Parliaments have signed a declaration objecting to the equation of Nazi and Soviet crimes.

Dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Final Solution Conference at Wannsee in 1942, when the Nazi leadership formally adopted the "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem", the declaration was signed by eight members of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party.

The declaration rejects attempts to diminish the Holocaust by deeming it to be "equal, similar or equivalent to Communism."

"Equating Nazi and Soviet crimes as this blurs the uniqueness of each," the Seventy Years Declaration states.

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groups, as well as efforts to have the Holocaust remembered on one common day with the victims of Communism.

Social democrats Justinas Karosas and Algirdas Sysas told BNS on Friday they believed that Nazi crimes were different from Soviet crimes as the former were exceptionally directed against one race, and their equation was the conservatives' plan which was unacceptable to both the leftists and Jews who survived the Holocaust.

"Hitler's doctrine was aimed at annihilating one nationality. The Communist ideology was more directed against social classes. There are many similarities, including killing of people. Killing is a similarity but these are a bit different things, and I don't support this position which offends the whole Jewish nation as they react sensitively, and, I think, justly," Karosas said.

"Both crimes are equally horrendous but we cannot equate these things, to put the equal sign as the Holocaust involved racial persecution of people of one nationality, horrendous persecution and annihilation. There was no racial principle during Stalinism (...) as Stalinist repressions were carried out by people of different nationalities," Sysas said.

In his opinion, crimes of every regime must be evaluated separately as "the equal mark offended the Jewish nation."

Lithuania also actively contributed to the preparation of a resolution, adopted by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) during the parliamentary assembly in 2009, which, contrary to the Seventy Years Declaration, equates Nazi and Stalinism crimes. Initiated by Lithuanian and Slovenian MPs, the resolution also backs an initiative to declare August 23, when the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact was signed, a common day of remembrance of Stalinism and Nazism victims.

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