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History

Decision by Group of Social Democrats to Sign Declaration Against Equating Nazi and Soviet Crimes is Pathetic

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Lithuanian foreign minister Audronius Ažubalis speaking through press representative Margarita Butkienė said the decision by a group of Social Democrat MPs and MEPs to sign a declaration rejecting the equating of Soviet and Nazi crimes is pathetic.

“It is pathetic that Lithuania’s Social Democrats are taking political steps in a direction opposite to that that being taken by all of Europe,” the minister’s representative said in a press release.

The declaration on the 70th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference in 1942, where Nazi leaders “definitively solved the Jewish problem,” was signed by 8 politicians from the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party. These were MPs Vytenis Andriukaitis, Justinas Karosas, Marija Pavilionienė, Julius Sabatauskas, Algirdas Sysas and Birutė Vėsaitė and MEPs Vilija Blinkevičiūtė and Justas Paleckis.

The declaration rejects attempts to “diminish” the Holocaust in the belief that it “is equal to, similar to or equivalent to” Communism.

The ministry’s press release said this statement contradicts a 2009 European Parliament resolution on conscience and totalitarianism for declaring a common European day of commemoration of all victims of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, as well as a 2009 resolution by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on unification of a divided Europe through

condemnation of both totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, those of the Nazis and the Soviets.

“In essence this sort of rhetoric by the Social Democrats repeats the Kremlin’s ideological positions, that Stalin is good and Hitler bad. It isn’t possible to find differences between Hitler and Stalin except in their moustaches (Hitler’s was shorter). Those professing both totalitarian ideologies are united in hatred for democracy. The legal status of the crimes they committed are totally the same: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity,” Butkienė said on the minister’s behalf.

Those who signed the document oppose equating Nazi and Soviet crimes in books on European history and efforts to legalize public displays of the swastika which, they say, is something fascist and racist groups are attempting. They also oppose the aspiration to honor victims of the Holocaust and the Soviet regime on the same day.

Lithuanian contributed actively in planning the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly resolution adopted in Vilnius in 2009 that does, unlike the “Declaration of 70 Years,” equate Nazi and Soviet crimes.

This resolution initiated by Lithuanian and Slovenian parliamentarians gives approval to the initiative to make August 23, the day the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact was signed, a common day of commemoration for victims of Stalinism and Nazism.