



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

LITUJAVOS RESPUBLIKOS SEIMO KANCELIARIJOS
KOMUNIKACIJOS DEPARTAMENTO
PRIĖMIMO SKYRIAUS RAŠTINĖS POSKYRIS
GAUTA

2017-01-30

Mr Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis
c/o Seimas of Lithuania
Gedimino 53
Vilnius 01109
Lithuania

24 January 2012

Dear Mr Andriukaitis,

I am writing to express my congratulations and strong support to you for defying the ugly politics of Holocaust devaluation developing in some political and media circles in Lithuania and joining with me and other mainstream European democratic politicians in signing the statement on the 70th anniversary of the Wannsee conference.

There is now an organised politically motivated campaign to try and deny the unique centrality of the Holocaust and the work of Jew-hating Nazis and their collaborators in many countries in occupied Europe to send millions of Jews, Roms and other victims of race-hate to be exterminated.

As someone who was imprisoned in Warsaw in 1982 when I was caught by the Communist police when taking money to the Polish union, Solidarity's underground operations, I need no lessons on communism. I have opposed Stalinism and communism all my life.

But the evil deeds of Stalin and the deaths that followed from his imperial rule over Europe, like the deaths associated with other imperial and authoritarian systems, cannot match the entirely racial-based hate and determination to kill every Jewish man, woman or child on the continent of Europe that emanated from the Wannsee conference. This brought into play the German genius for transport, industrial, chemical and organisational skills to find Jews in every corner of Europe and transport them over long distances to be put to death. The Soviet Gulag was evil but there were no gas chambers in Siberia. The US treatment of Native Americans in the 19th century, the British who allowed millions of Indians to die of hunger in the Second World War or presided over the Irish famine a century before, or the Ottoman massacres of Armenians in 1915 were wicked acts but were not on a par with Nazi Jew-hate based genocide. And given that anti-semitic ideology is back in play today we have to

pay special attention to combating any move to downplay or lessen the unique historic centrality of the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance.

Sadly the Nazis found many willing collaborators in most of the European countries they occupied. The attempt to make a precise equivalence between Hitler and Stalin devalues the specific one-off nature of the Holocaust and reflects the new anti-semitism which seeks to remove from the Jewish people their correct sense of their unique suffering. It plays into the hands of the worst Islamist terrorist ideology which insists on devaluing the Holocaust and rejects the right of the Jewish people to have their own state of Israel to live in.

I am saddened that rather than welcoming your statement, the Foreign Minister of Lithuania, Audronius Azubalic, has sought to blacken your name. I cannot believe he made light of the Holocaust with his remark, "It is not possible to find differences between Hitler and Stalin except in their moustaches (Hitler's was shorter)." The mass murder of 6 million Jews is not something to make jokes about. Please tell me that this reported remark was not made!

The whole world is watching with concern at the rising level of anti-Jewish comments and media reports in Lithuania. Have we learnt nothing that we must return to the anti-semitism of pre-1939 Europe? Of course the crimes of Stalin and the sufferings of the Lithuanian people under communism should never be forgotten. But that sad period of your nation's history is not made better by devaluing the Holocaust and denying that some Lithuanians did collaborate in the Nazi policy of Jewish extermination.

I know it must be lonely to take a stand on such a controversial subject but I wanted to write to you to say you are not alone and every decent British and European citizen stands with you as you say that the extermination of Europe's Jews between 1941 and 1945 is a unique crime and history and the nationalism and racism that gave rise to the ideology that allowed this to happen must never be forgotten, forgiven or given new nourishment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Denis MacShane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Denis" and the last name "MacShane" clearly distinguishable.

Rt Hon Dr Denis MacShane MP
UK Minister of Europe 2002-2005
UK Council of Europe delegate 2005-2010