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[NOTE: Some text colored red (for rapid reference) in the translation only]

Placing the Equals Sign between Communism and Nazism

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States that have liberated themselves from the Soviet bloc want to enter an item on the working agenda of the European Union concerning crimes of the Soviet regime: **to judge these crimes, including in EU law, as equal to the crimes committed by the Nazis.** This week there were hearings in the European Parliament on the theme of the crimes of Communism where participants Wednesday adopted a declaration, one of whose main points was to call [for] a judgment of the crimes of the totalitarian Communist regime across the EU.

Member of the European Parliament conservative Vytautas Landsbergis emphasized that without judging the common inheritance including Soviet crimes against humanity, Europe cannot go forward, and that to deny these crimes is to further belittle the victims. Landsbergis said a judgment of

the crimes of Communism was a question for Europe at large rather than just for those states that experienced the Soviet regime.

"War and similar crimes committed somewhere in Europe by Europeans is our common inheritance. The denial of these crimes is Europe's failure. The same goes for not knowing, or simply not wanting to know about them. Through such a failure of will to recognize our history, we rehabilitate comrade Stalin and become his successors," Landsbergis said Wednesday in parliamentary hearings.

"I don't think that if ten thousand French officials were murdered at Katyn, as happened in 1939, that president N. Sarkozy would keep quiet while meeting with Russian president D. Medvedev," Landsbergis said.

In 1940 the Soviet repressive organization NKVD killed more than 20,000 Polish reserve soldiers at Katyn. When mass graves were discovered in 1943, the Soviets attempted to hand the blame to the Nazis. From among Russian leaders, only the last president of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian president Boris Yeltsin admitted the massacre was the work of the NKVD. Present-day Russia refuses to recognize the Katyn massacre was genocide.

The declaration adopted Wednesday recommends that the European Parliament call on the national parliaments of EU member-states that were under the Soviet oppression to adopt laws to bar former personnel and collaborators of the Soviet security structure from entering the European Parliament or posts in national government.

The European Parliament hearings are another step in the attempt to judge the crimes of totalitarian regimes at the European Union level by equating them with the crimes of the Nazis.

At the end of November the European Union Justice and Internal Affairs Service adopted a basic decision on racism and xenophobia, under which member states were required to criminalize criminal acts [sic] of racism and xenophobia: public discrimination, sowing of violence and hatred against different groups of people, propagating such material, and public approval of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Although this decision did not include the crimes of the Soviet totalitarian regime, representatives from the states of the former regime, including

from Lithuania, forged initiatives to include [these crimes] in the EU legal system.

Due to efforts by Lithuania and sympathetic member states, the general declaration of the Council was appended to the basic decision in November, condemning the crimes committed by all totalitarian regimes and indicating that within two years of the basic decision coming into effect, the European Commission will consider whether an additional legal instrument is needed in this area.

Meanwhile, in the Lithuanian legal system, acts regarding the the crimes of Soviet genocide, i.e., their denial or justification, are not criminalized, and, experts say, this is an obstacle in attempting to equate the crimes of Soviet genocide with the Nazi genocide.

At the end of last year parliamentarians rejected amendments to the criminal code which called for criminal prosecution for denying, belittling or justifying the aggression or the genocide perpetrated by the Soviet Union.