

Translation of:

<http://www.balsas.tv/naujiena/209939/politikai-atmeta-the-economist-kaltinim>

Note: References to the ECONOMIST are to the article at:

http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=11958563

POLITICIANS REJECT THE CHARGES OF *THE ECONOMIST* THAT LITHUANIA IS EXACTING REVENGE UPON THE JEWS

BNS [BAL TIC NEWS SERVICE]

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Lithuanian politicians and officials reject the accusations of an influential British weekly that an attempt by Lithuanian prosecutors to question Jewish Holocaust survivors was akin to revenge and an attempt to avoid responsibility for those Lithuanians who had taken part in the massacre of Jews during World War II.

Lithuanian politicians and officials are of the opinion that all suspicions of prosecutors have to be clarified in a legal way, without making them political and, even more so, without it pertaining it to the alleged goals of Lithuania to rewrite history after the war by erasing from it its own guilt for murdering the Jews and people of other nations.

According to the assistant of the Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas, Vilius Kavaliauskas, who is responsible for issues related to the Jews, the General Prosecutor's office should hurry to investigate those cases, because while delaying, the USA, Israel and other countries are angry with Lithuania. The Government, according to V. Kavaliauskas, cannot hasten the process.

“In the West, people do not understand our specifics and what was happening in the post-war period. The name of Lithuania is ‘pulled about’ in foreign media, our Lithuanian diplomats are asked about our intentions to revisit World War II history on their visits to Israel, and we are kind of pending in the eyes of foreigners. Therefore, this problem, which is as big as the state, has to be solved legally as fast as possible. The President has already asked the prosecutor’s office to solve this issue in one way or another,” the assistant to the Prime Minister said to BNS.

A member of the Foreign Affairs committee at the Seimas and of the Homeland Union fraction Audronius Ažubalis also spoke up for a legal solution of the Jewish issue and said that he did not see any relation between the charges of prosecutors against several Jews and the wish of Lithuanians to avoid responsibility for participation in the Holocaust.

“If the prosecutor’s office opens a case regarding the events that happened during the war, then, probably, there are serious reasons for this. Therefore, the best defence is to come to the questioning and to deny real or alleged guilt. And to just blame Lithuania is at the very least not fair – only individual persons of Lithuanian nationality took part in the massacres of the Jews. For those pains the President apologised to the Jews in public, monuments were built for them and the restitution to the Jews is underway. We know our history and we have apologised to the Jews,” — A. Ažubalis said to BNS.

According to The Economist, formal challenges to a few persons of the Jewish nationality, who are suspected with crimes against Lithuanians in the post-war period, are not articulated and the prosecutors say that they are just investigating it. Representatives from the General Prosecutor’s office cannot say to BNS yet in which stage the abovementioned cases are, because allegedly the prosecutors best acquainted with it are on vacation.

Authors of the article “Prosecution and Persecution. Lithuania has to stop blaming victims” that has appeared in the newest issue of The Economist are asking whether Lithuania is really persecuting Holocaust survivors as criminals.

The wish of Lithuanian prosecutors, repeated in the weekly, is to question 86 year old Fania Brantsovsky and Rachel Margolis, who are suspected of have participated in the massacre by the partisans in the Kaniūkai village in 1944. They also note the wish to question former director of Yad Vashem museum Yitzhak Arad, who in the book published in 1979, wrote about his partisan squad “punishing” villagers for not giving them food.

F. Brantsovsky and R. Margolis are suspected of having participated in the Kaniūkai massacre. According to the data of Lithuanian historians, the Kaniūkai village was attacked in January 1944 by a 120-150 strong Soviet partisan squad. During the assault, 38 villagers were murdered and a few more injured. In the opinion of historians, the reason of the attack could have been related to the Kaniūkai village’s armed activities of self-defence, fighting against the lawlessness and violence of the Red partisans.

Y. Arad is suspected of alleged criminal activities of the Soviet NKVD that were carried out in the Nazi occupied Lithuania during World War II and during the post-war period, that are assessed as crimes against humanity against the Lithuanian citizens (massacre of civilians, war captives and Lithuanian partisans).

When Germany occupied Lithuania in 1941, Y. Arad joined a Soviet partisan squad and later, served in the Soviet repressive NKVD structure. When he came to Israel after the war, he served in the army and in 1972, when he was in the reserve, he became a historian, specializing in the Holocaust.

After the Nazis occupied Lithuania almost 90 percent of the 200,000 strong Jewish community were exterminated.