

## Lithuanian Nazis become partisans?

By [Global Research](#)

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02/10/2008 22:07 VILNIUS (Vladimir Beskudnikov for RIA Novosti) - Where the Nazi henchmen of World War II are concerned, most Lithuanians hurry to set themselves apart from their Baltic neighbors, Latvians and Estonians. They keep saying: "There was no SS division recruited in Lithuania," but their actions prove the contrary.

Although there was no Lithuanian SS division, there were auxiliary police units, battalions, whose ill fame spread far beyond Lithuania's borders. Lithuanian police slaughtered both the Jewish population of Lithuania, which was being confined and killed in ghettos, and Red Army servicemen taken prisoner. Twelve Lithuanian police battalions, totaling 485 men, led by Maj. Antanas Impulyavichius, left a trail of blood in Belarus as well, having burned down several dozen villages.

Over 200 villagers from Khatyn, which became a symbol of tragedy of the Belarusian people, were burnt alive on Impulyavichius' order. The Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania has officially acknowledged that this unit is responsible for the murder of over 20,000 Belarusian civilians, who were in no way connected with combat actions.

After gaining independence in 1991, Lithuanian authorities tried to partly admit liability for atrocities committed by their fellow countrymen. Algirdas Brazauskas, former First Secretary of Lithuania's Communist Party and then President of the independent Republic of Lithuania, during his visit to Israel in 1995, offered apologies on behalf of the Lithuanian people. Lithuania's ambassador to Belarus was always present at the events commemorating the burnt Belarusian villages.

In recent few years, however, the political environment in Lithuania has seen a major shift. Although Ceslovas Juršenas, Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament, delivered a speech on Holocaust Memorial Day on September 23 in Panerai outside Vilnius, the authorities' attitude towards Jews is gradually changing from repentance to threats and insults.

It is no secret that Lithuania's current President Valdas Adamkus collaborated with the Nazis during WWII, enlisting in one of the "auxiliary units." It is not by accident that in 1944 he emigrated to Germany, and after a while to the United States.

After the Nazis launched an attack on the U.S.S.R. in June 1941, right after the Red Army withdrew from Lithuania, Lithuanian voluntary militia units started the extermination of the Jewish population. In Kaunas alone, over 9,000 Jews were tortured to death in just one day. By the end of 1941, thanks to "high efficiency" of Lithuanian volunteer units around 80% of the country's 200,000 Jews were killed, accused of being "Bolshevik henchmen."

Today, there are 2,800 Jews left in Lithuania. Still, the country's government is unable to

ensure their security. In recent years, many friends turned into enemies. Since last September, Lithuania's Prosecutor's Office has been demanding extradition of a former member of Lithuanian NKVD (former Commissariat for Internal Affairs), Yitzhak Arad, from Israel, to sue him for killing Nazi collaborationists, who are now proudly called "partisans." The government is making every effort to put together the crimes committed by the Soviets and the Nazis, and have eventually made "Soviet" a synonym for "Nazi."

In 2000, Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus signed a decree to establish a commission for the investigation of Nazi and Soviet crimes. In 2005, he refused to attend the 60th anniversary of Victory Day in Moscow to pay tribute to the memory of the fallen in the fight against Nazism.

Several months ago a law forbidding the use of Nazi and Soviet symbols was passed in Lithuania. The authorities' attitude towards World War II veterans also seems inexplicable. Everyone who took part in the war was put together in a single category, no matter on which side they fought, and therefore a former Nazi could easily go marching through Lithuanian streets. Marches of Nazi "veterans," however, haven't become a regular event in Lithuania yet, unlike in Latvia and Estonia.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center's investigation in Lithuania to identify absconding former Nazi collaborationists, was confronted with the opposition of the country's official authorities. The center's director Efraim Zuroff, who has collected data on over 360 suspects, says Lithuanian politicians refuse to prosecute the Nazi criminals, claiming that many Lithuanians were victims of war crimes, and not criminals.

Although they (the Baltic states) talk a lot of their suffering during the Soviet era, they do nothing to punish the murderers who collaborated with the Nazis. The government is reluctant to reveal the true number of the country's citizens who were involved in atrocities, Efraim Zuroff said.

Currently, Lithuania is included in the organization's black list as a country taking no substantial action to identify Nazi collaborationists, despite the existing legal base for that. Along with Lithuania, this group also includes Croatia, Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine.

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