



2006 ORDINARY SESSION

(first part)

REPORT

Fifth sitting

Wednesday 25 January 2006 at 3 p.m.

ADDENDUM 1

**Need for international condemnation of the crimes of totalitarian
communist regimes**

The following texts were submitted for inclusion in the official report by members who were present in the Chamber but were prevented by lack of time from delivering them.

Mr SASI (*Finland*): The report is excellent and analytical and caused active discussion. The extent of the debate needed is evident from the length of the speakers list.

In world history no other ideology guided so many totalitarian regimes with such human rights violations. The report counts the death toll of the victims – the Soviet Union, 20 millions, China, 65 millions, etc. Democracy was won in 1989. Is there still a reason to discuss the matter? Yes, 2. First, there are still communist states: North Korea, Cuba, China and Vietnam. The work of the Council of Europe is not over yet: I ask the Group of the Unified European Left: should we not work for workers human rights and core labour rights in these countries? Secondly, communist regimes and communism were never properly analysed and condemned after the fall of the Berlin wall. To teach our youth, we have to tell the truth of communism. There must be a way of no return.

Who suffered most from communism? The population of the former communist countries. The declaration directs sympathy for the Russian people, who suffered most under Stalin. In my country, Finland, the communists suffered most. Many idealistic Communist Party members moved to Soviet Carelia, to seek an ideal society. Many were disappointed. In the 1930s; many of them, although loyal, were murdered. Stalin did not trust in them. I do not see any difference between Nazism and communism. I do not see why you can murder people and say that it is justified. It is ideology: you believe that you can sacrifice anything for your political goals. For Nazism, the belief was in a pure race. For communists, it was one party worker's class dictatorship. The opponents of those ideologies have no human value. It is a question of class struggle. The intelligentsia therefore suffered the most.

Communist actions have been defended here today. It has been said that communists fought against the Nazis. I appreciate that, but it did not help those people because an equivalent dictatorship was established. Seizing power from one evil is not a good thing if you do not create a society based on human rights and democracy. Some people say that they can condemn communism only if we condemn other violations of human rights. Here in the Council of Europe we condemn all human rights violations all the time. When we speak of human rights anywhere we shall condemn all violations. There cannot be a selective shopping list. Globalisation supports democracy human rights. Today it is not easy to create a closed society where people do not know of their basic rights. There is only one such country left in the whole world: communist – North Korea.

Mr CHRISTODOULIDES (*Cyprus*): Mr President, the report by Mr Lindblat undeniably caused feelings of sadness and fury among many political forces in Europe, irrespective of their political roots and ideologies. Going through this text I could not but wonder about the extent to which Mr Lindblad is indeed aware of the history of the 20th century. We live in democratic societies and of course we cannot and should not deny the right of any individual to have his own views and thoughts on any issue. When these views attempt, however, to distort history and constitute contempt to people, we cannot stay indifferent.

We would not be exaggerating if we were to say that this report constitutes severe contempt and a great insult to the longstanding fights in which the communist movement and / or communist national parties engaged in order for us today to be able to enjoy freedom and democracy. No-one has the right to disregard, in such a distorting way, the invaluable contribution of the communist movement to the world's history and the crucial role that communists played for centuries, by always being on the front line, fighting for social justice, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, national independence and the prevalence of democracy and the rule of law. Millions of communists sacrificed their lives in order for us to be able today to live in a better world. They thought not of themselves but of the general good and never stopped fighting for the liberation of nations, and for socio-economic achievements for generations to come. Communists always stood for and fought against fascism. I ask all of you whether today's world would be the one we know, if it were not for the sacrifice of the lives of 20 millions Russians? They did not think of themselves or their families when they were fighting against the fascist forces of Hitler and managed to crush them within the former USSR.

I would also like to express my deep astonishment at the rapporteur's reference in the conclusions of his report, where he states that the communist ideology bears similarities with Nazism! I cannot but describe such a view as an utter disgrace and the worst kind of insult to the ideologies of millions of people, and to all those Russian heroes who stood up bravely to the challenge of history and halted the fascism which was threatening the whole world. Let me also emphasise my strong

belief that this report is nothing else than a desperate attempt by conservative and extremist forces to de-focus the people of Europe from their day-to-day problems, which in most cases have become unbearable. Day after day, Europeans, and people everywhere in general, realise more and more, that the new state of affairs does not take into account their worries, everyday problems and well-being. They feel that their rightful socio-economic gains are under serious threat of curtailment.

This report also attempts to offer coverage to the great insufficiencies, democratic deficiencies, human manipulation and negative consequences of the universal imperialistic new state of affairs, which has nothing else to demonstrate. It wars in the name of economic interests, rather than protecting ideals and people and being against the killing of innocent human beings and encouragement of all forms of racism. Instead of using the ideals and values of the communist ideology - which if properly applied will effectively address people's everyday problems and their fears as to where this world is heading - the report attempts to suppress such ideals. Surely its adoption will only achieve taking us back to mediaeval times, when respect for a different ideology other than the supposed "correct one" could not be accepted and anything different was considered to be anathema and was suppressed in the most violent and brutal way.

Dear colleagues, The international communist movement never attempted to avoid criticism and even self-criticism, when that was essential, with respect to various periods of its long history. To the contrary, it always demonstrated enough courage and self-respect to admit its drawbacks. However, it is indecent to erase all its great achievements and the inspiration it provided to people in extremely difficult times for mankind. It constitutes an insult to the memory of all those proud communists, whose blood wrote some of history's most glorious pages.

We therefore call here today not only on communists but on all progressive forces to put a halt to this attempt to create anti-communist hysteria. That would not serve any just cause, but undermine the huge social achievements which the communist movement fought hard and relentlessly to win and pave the way for a curtailment of the socio-economic rights which the communists won, not only for themselves but for every worker on this planet.

It is therefore imperative that we overwhelmingly reject this report, which aims to change history and to suppress rights and freedoms which have been won through centuries of struggles, in order for us to enjoy a brighter future and live in a better world not governed by fascism and imperialism. Let us therefore say no to a paper that constitutes a disgrace to human mankind and to human fights for freedom, democracy and respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Thank you.

Ms PAPADEMITRIOU (*Greece*): According to Tacitus, the great Roman historian and philosopher, "history is the depositary of human transtemporality and no matter how honestly or falsely it is presented or translated, it can only be read, understood and perceived through words, buildings and proofs of human creativity!"

Whether I like it or not and I have many personal and national, moral and political reasons not to like it communism is part of our history and its influence goes way beyond its geopolitical field of application. Its past and ongoing presence in the weaving of history's web raises a lot of questions and challenging dilemmas that cannot be answered yet. However, this report and draft recommendation made us think in depth, which is a positive outcome.

Allow me now to contextualise ideologically my position by asking you some questions: How ideologies come to an end? After the age of extremes the 20th century now what? Is this the end of political discourse and of political correctness as we see the innihilation of ideological differences? Is multiculturalism an enrichment to our horizon or an erosion of every ideological demarcation line? Can we project the present to the past? Is not our desideratum synchronicity for a genuine grasping of history? How can we test the way in which the past is conceived, not now but keeping in mind what the dilemma was. Do the bleeding wounds of our recent past get healed by exorcising, oversimplifying and forgetting? Should we not feel afraid that the serpent's eggs may have within them racism and xenophobia? How can we, in this blessed school of democracy, after 11 September, and through our peoples' inertia to understand what has changed in conspiracy theories, digest the curtailing of some fundamental civil rights, for the good reason of protecting ourselves from terrorism, by ostracising a deep-rooted traditional European ideology? Finally, are there among us colleagues

who think that our era is the end of history? Why, then, bother with China and condemn the crimes of the communist past in order ideologically to contain China or punish Putin's unwillingness to kneel? Can we build modern Europe out of the guilt consciousness of the new comers or at least a good number of them?

One of the most appalling choices of communism was, and still is I fear, the misuse of the past for political purposes. It is unacceptable for us, representing 800 000 000 free-thinking Europeans, to do the same.

The Berlin wall has been demolished. Heavens, how I celebrated its fall! It is not, therefore, with my one, but very conscientious vote, that I will help to build a new one at an ideological level.

I remind you that Thucydides was read in the U.S. for New York as Athens, and Moscow as Sparta. Having always disregarded historic lessons, they ignored the fact that Athenian democracy was crushed, not in Athens or in Sparta, but in the hubris of the Sicily expedition.

I call on you, dear colleagues, to avoid this dangerous journey.

Mr VRETTOS (*Greece*): Dear Colleagues, I am appealing to reason your reason. Each of us individually has our political sympathies, tendencies, and even prejudices. However, at this level, it is only reason that can help us decide what to do on this issue. So, I suggest that we try to get our facts right and then place them in the right context.

First, it makes little sense to talk about communist regimes. Some parties that called themselves communist parties were in power in their countries and tried to build a kind of socialism. There were other parties which tried to do the same, but they were not called communist that was the case in Poland and Hungary. They all tried to create socialism in a non-parliamentary kind of way, as opposed to, let us say, the parliamentary way chosen by the social democratic parties of Sweden, Germany and the Labour Party in Britain.

Secondly, it is true that some of the practices of communism could be considered ordinary criminal practices, but so could some of the practices of democracy; remember the 2 millions dead in the period of the Terror after the French Revolution; remember the thousands of executions of anyone involved in the Paris commune after its defeats in 1871; remember the 3000 dead and missing in Chile after the fall of the democratically elected government of Allende. It was a coup and a massacre organised by the democratically elected government of the USA and its CIA. And of course we should not forget Vietnam, Rwanda, Algeria, Nicaragua and most of Latin America. The list is actually quite long.

So, I call upon your reason and judgement. Just envisage how, 30 years from now, the people of Europe will look upon this judgement, whichever way it goes. I believe that time may be on the side of the representatives here who will vote against this document. After all, 30 years from now, they may be able to judge more impartially whether the era of "existing socialism" was, overall, positive or negative, in the onward course of humanity.

Mr JAŘAB (*Czech Republic*): Those who oppose or criticise this report by Mr Göran Lindbald are either members or sympathisers of communist parties or people who have been fortunate enough not to have to live under hard conditions of communist totalitarianism. There may be still others who do not necessarily see the close link between the communist regimes of the past as well as the present and open, if not planned, violations of human rights. I would like to assure those colleagues that such a link is not coincidental but is a very logical outcome of the communist ideology - the dictatorship of proletariat which gradually changes into the dictatorship of the Communist Party and its security forces - and so it becomes an inseparable part of the practical political application of the ideology. Decades of human history in various parts of the world can testify to massive violations of basic human rights, and, by ill-fortune, my country was among them. Losses of lives, injustice, the jailing of innocent people, discrimination in many paths of life, including free movement, access to education, freedom of expression, and so on - all these facts were part of communist regimes of the past and remain so where such regimes are still in force, for example, in Belarus, North Korea and China.

Mr Lindblad's report asks for the condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes, not of the communist ideologies themselves – yet there is opposition to such a move. Is it logical that communist parties that survived the collapse of the Soviet Union, both in the former Soviet bloc and outside it, would want to distance themselves from crimes committed in the past when they ruled in a totalitarian style? Or does their reluctance or refusal to do so reveal that their understanding of crime varies from an understanding of crime in free and democratic societies? Attempts on the part of our post-totalitarian communists to justify or “explain” violations of human rights in the world where communism is still in power – as, for instance, in Cuba – manifest their conviction that the objectives of their ideology justify a qualified attitude towards observing human rights. That means that, provided they themselves came to power – again – even basic human rights could, and most likely would be endangered. After all, a mere glimpse into the printed ideological programs of young communists in my country still reveals that the idea of achieving power through violent means is not dead.

A debate is going on in the Czech Republic concerning the totalitarian communist past, including the attitude of the officially registered Communist Party of the Czech lands towards this past which, to say the least, is not very open, open-minded and fair. That is, after all, not a surprising finding. In two committees of the Czech Senate – the committee on human rights and the committee on international affairs, defence and security – the text of the Lindblad report was debated and general support was expressed. I hope that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will understand the importance that international condemnation of the crimes of totalitarian communist regimes will carry to the world.

Mrs NĚMCOVÁ (*Czech Republic*): I would like to acquaint you with the declaration by Ms Kavalírova, President of the Czech Confederation of Political Prisoners, who herself went through imprisonment by Czech communist authorities in the 1950s: “We, political prisoners, living witnesses of former communist regime, watch with great worries the new rise of communist ideas. We call on the Council of Europe to help us prevent a new abuse of democracy and freedom by communists.” In our country, the Communist Party was declared criminal and contemptible in 1993 by the Law n. 198/93 Coll. (collection).

We are astonished to see the incomprehension of democratic governments in many European countries which hesitate to condemn and prohibit the existence of a movement that has always abused and suppressed democracy and human rights. We beg to stress again – doing so on the basis of our own painful experience – that communism can never be reformed and is absolutely incompatible with the notion of democracy. It is a well-known fact that communism is responsible for the deaths of millions of people all over the world and that has also been clearly expressed in the report of Mr Göran Lindblad. We are also very surprised by the fact that members of communist parties can sit in the highest institutions of the European Union and other international organisations. Sixty years ago, we had to face up to the atrocities of the Nazi regime, with great losses. Nobody would ever allow this movement to rise again, believing in its democratic intentions. Why is this possible in the case of communism?

With all determination, we call on the Council of Europe to avert the new threat of communism and to use its ethical and political power to prevent the spreading of communist ideology and prohibit all totalitarian parties and organisations. We believe that the Council of Europe has a political mandate that will allow it to promote human rights and freedoms consistently and that it will serve to save Europe from a resurrection of communism.

Ms KONEČNÁ (*Czech Republic*): The rapporteur has presented us with a draft resolution that expresses the “need for an international condemnation of crimes of communism”. This draft resolution lists the crimes, in the rapporteur's words, of communist regimes and claims that “communist ideology, wherever and whenever implemented, be it in Europe or elsewhere, has always resulted in massive terror, crimes and large scales violation of human rights”. Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that such a reactionary and ideological campaign would show strong disrespect for the dignity of the millions of people who fought for freedom and emancipation in the name of communism, who fought in the name of a belief and struggle for a better future and who fought for socio-economic equality and for freedom in many parts of the world. The communist contribution to the fight for human liberty and dignity has been recognised by many significant individuals and organisations. This draft resolution is also very disrespectful to all those who actively defend the rights of workers in labour unions and without whom any progress in workers rights would be unthinkable. We cannot forget and deny that it

was those communist regimes that placed social and economic rights on the agenda in many parts of the world, as an important and necessary addition to the civil and political rights proposed and defended by other non-communist countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this draft resolution in a way attempts to put communism and communist regimes on the same level as Nazism and its horrors. This comparison is unacceptable. The equation of Nazism with communism represents a strong distortion of history. Communists stood up everywhere and always as the opposing force to fascism and contributed, as no other social-political force did, to its defeat. This draft resolution, which aims at international condemnation of the crimes of communism, omits some important facts. Even though the rapporteur, in his historical reasoning, gives examples of victims of communist regimes, he forgets to mention the persecution of communists in other parts of the non-communist world, the mass killing of people who were executed in the name of different ideologies, whose lives were taken or who were tortured precisely for their belief in these ideals of equality, dignity and freedom, for being communists. The rapporteur forgot to mention the thousands of persecuted in Latin America and Asia or those who were persecuted during the period of McCarthyism in the United States and the thousands of people who are still dying in unnecessary wars.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am not defending the crimes of Stalinist regime and atrocities and I am aware of the losses of human lives and human rights breaches. Yet the draft resolution presented by the rapporteur does not condemn the authors of these atrocities. It aims at stigmatisation of the communist ideology as such. We cannot let ourselves be misguided by this merely political declaration and a dangerous and unworthy attempt for rewriting of history. I therefore strongly appeal to you to reject this draft resolution. Let us not look back and let us allow us, young people, to progress and strive for a better future for all of us. Thank you very much.

Mr MATUŠIĆ (*Croatia*): The draft resolution finally seeks to rectify a big injustice, namely, the long silence of international institutions about the victims of the totalitarian communist regimes, whose number has risen to more than one hundred million, till now. I say "till now" because, unfortunately, even at this very moment, in the name of the communist ideology, where it still holds power, many grave breaches of human rights are occurring. Those include murders and the liquidation of political opponents.

Thus, I fully support this resolution and I thank Mr Lindblad for his honest work in preparing it. I do so especially because I come from a state that has unfortunately undergone all the atrocities and horrors of a totalitarian communist regime, including the torture of political opponents as well as liquidations.

According to the data collected so far, about 250 000 Croats were executed after the end of the second world war on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia and elsewhere. Allow me to mention the Bleiburg tragedy, which is deep in the collective memory of Croats. I have to stress that they were not given a fair trial, indeed, they were not given a trial at all. Their murderers and those who, in the name of the communist party, gave orders for mass executions, have never faced justice. By accepting the proposed resolution, we are expressing, at least, sympathy with victims and their families, and marking with appropriate piety, all the places where the afore-mentioned crimes were committed.

Finally, I cannot help but tell you by way of example on the subject, a story from the free city of Dubrovnik, from which I come. It happened when the second world war was over. Without any trial, more than 50 intellectuals were executed, members of clergy included, only because they expressed different opinions, which were not in accordance with communist ideology. Such things should not be allowed to happen anymore, anywhere again.

Ms KUCLER-DOLINAR (*Slovenia*): Europe is the cradle of democratic values, yet right in the middle of its civilisation framework the most violent totalitarian systems – Nazism, fascism and communism – occurred. No wonder this makes someone feel discomforted, or even ashamed. It gives us one more reason not to close our eyes to such facts. Given our responsibility, we should not delay making a clear distinction between democracy and totalitarianism, which in some parts of the world still rules under the institutional form of communism.

In addition to countries where totalitarian regime are flourishing , this issue also concerns European states in transition. A word from our side – from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – might help such states to have behind them such inhuman regimes more easily and rapidly. Slovenia is no exception. Fifty years of totalitarianism left their consequences in every aspect, including in people's attitudes. This is mostly reflected in the apathy towards public issues and in the inability to make independent, critical judgements. It all makes part of a vicious circle, as democratisation only involves the legislative and executive branches of power while progress in terms of the media, the economic centres of power, and justice is gradual and slow.

Totalitarianism is characterised by the lack of the rule of law, by one monopolistic party, unlimited control, instrumentalised organisation, psychological terror, fight against an imaginary enemy, and pervasion with ideology. What does it have in common with democratic standards? Why do our socialist colleagues have doubts about condemning such regimes? Of course we need to comply with the principle that at our level – at the level of this distinguished meeting – no judgements may be made concerning people, yet we should have no problem condemning a regime and its various manifestations. In doing so, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Europe – as a promoter of democratic values – must not allow themselves to be outpassed by the rest of the democratic world.

Fifteen years have passed since most European countries formally abolished communist regimes and it is now time to meet our obligation by adopting the proposed resolution.

Mr HÖGMARK (*Sweden*): Many thanks to my countryman, Göran Lindblad, the rapporteur, for an excellent report. During this long debate many speakers have given worthwhile contributions – some on principle but also deeply personal stories. Together, they give a brutal picture of the depth, volume and organisation of the crimes of world communism.

I would like to contribute with some pictures from my childhood and early life, pictures and memories which have been very important in forming my political ideas and work. I was born in 1945 some months after the Second World War came to an end. That war was soon followed by the Cold War and the balance of terror. In 1952, I was seven, I began school and met one result of the crimes of communism. Ten out of the total of 22 pupils were children whose parents and grandparents had left the Baltic countries, Estonia and Latvia, to escape terror and deportation to Siberia. Of course, when you are seven years and have no experience of your own from war and terror it is not so easy to understand why school mates and their parents always lock their doors and always seem to be afraid when you knock on their doors. Later on I knew better.

In 1956, when I was 11 and a little more aware of politics and what was going on in Europe, I got pictures in the papers and heard voices on the radio about the Russian invasion of Hungary.

With the technology of those days, the reporters on the radio gave us a brutal description of how the Hungarian peoples' heroic resistance was crushed. Punishments and deportations were daily occurrences. The blood was washed away from the streets of Budapest. The suffering of the people continued. I will never forget those pictures from a gloomy November 1956.

In 1961, when I was 16, I got new pictures of the communist brutality: the Berlin wall, with pictures of desperate family members trying to jump the borders to join family and freedom. In 1968, I was 23. It was my first national parliament election campaign, and there was still another brutal crime – now against Czechoslovakia. There was the very nice beginning of the Prague spring, with a small but growing number of possibilities of some freedom of expression. But for the dictators in the Kremlin and their dirty boys in Prague, the growing freedoms for the people were a horrible thought. We know the result. After some weeks, there was a lack of freedom, punishment, censorship, etc.

It would take 20 years before the Iron Curtain crashed and a new era of hope for the future arrived – not without problems, of course. Decades of crimes against individuals, institutions and whole nations are not so easy to repair. But after 1990, Europe, delivered from the evil and crimes of the communist system, can look ahead.

It is important not to forget. For the rest of my life I will keep the pictures and memories from my early youth as a warning against totalitarian regimes. From the whole of my heart I feel a strong

and thankful joy about what is now going on in a new and free Europe. I also feel a very strong joy in my heart that my father – born in 1917, when the Russian revolution started, got a picture, shortly before his death in 1990, of the fall of the Iron Curtain and world communism. Mr President, those were some personal reflections and memories on this report and issue.

Mr HERKEL (*Estonia*): Some years ago I had an opportunity in the Estonian Parliament to be the rapporteur on the issue "On the crimes of the communist occupation regime in Estonia".

In doing my job I understood that, to be rapporteur on the crimes of communist regime, you do not have to be a historian because there is a lot of clear evidence about the crimes committed. Rather, you must be a psychologist who deals with the wounds of history and the people's need for justice. At the same time, you must also deal with the irrational fears and preconceptions some people have. We had long and even difficult debates in our national parliament, but finally the document was adopted, with a vast majority in favour and only one vote against.

My feeling today here and my feelings four years ago in my national parliament are slightly similar. The scope of emotions is probably larger here. There are similar arguments which we must repeat and similar clumsy arguments against people's desire for justice. I do not speak about the clear lack of knowledge of history which some people have or about the unwillingness to confess the historical truth. Let us speak about irrational fears. Some people ask us: "Would you condemn the present political leaders with a communist background?" "No," I say, "There is no personal attribution against people who never committed crimes!" We must simply read the headline carefully: "Need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes".

I received many letters and e-mails in recent days. In one of them, a 23 year-old member of the Communist Party from one of the very old European democracies asked whether he would also be condemned. "Definitely, not!" is the clear answer.

But certainly I would like to add that a better knowledge of history is necessary for the young people from old democracies, who sometimes are very ignorant about the history of the eastern part of Europe.

My other point is about ideological attribution: whether or not the communist ideology is guilty. That can be a matter for intellectual discussion, but it is not a matter for today's report. The only sentence we find in today's report is: "The crimes were justified in the name of the class struggle theory and the principle of dictatorship of the proletariat". And it is historical truth.

Mr FRUNDA (*Romania*): I was born in a communist country. One of my favourite jokes from school was about the teacher who asks the pupil if scientific socialism is science or not. The pupil answers that he does not believe it to be a science because if it were, it would have been tested on mice first. So I would not like to discuss communist ideology.

I would like strongly to condemn the crimes of the communist regime. I congratulate the rapporteur on his effort and the results of his work. The recommendations are logical and well-founded but mirror the subtlety of a politician who learned from books what communism and its crimes were, who did not physically live the fear of not having the courage to speak your mind, the fear of losing your job for something you have said to a co-worker, the fear of getting yourself arrested and put in jail without a fair trial or the fear of your family never getting to know your grave. Still, all these things happened. As well, women were tortured or beaten to death for having an abortion and newborn children died in incubators because of electricity cut-offs during the night.

Before 1990, I was a lawyer. I have defended people convicted for their religious beliefs, children brutally beaten for having the guts to write on the walls "Down with Ceaușescu!". I have also defended homosexuals humiliated by the police and their cell colleagues for their sexual orientation.

Communism also committed ethnic and religious crimes. Many colleagues of mine were forced to leave their country only because they were ethnic Hungarians. They could not work in the cities in which they had been born. Ceaușescu was selling ethnic Germans and Jews, crazily dreaming of a pure nation with no national minorities. Nothing was too expensive in order to achieve this goal: Hungarian schools were assimilated by Romanian ones, traditional Churches' properties –

except for the Orthodox ones – were nationalised and Hungarian newspapers became simple instruments for communist propaganda.

The examples I have mentioned are very few compared to what the totalitarian communist regime did. Time is not enough to remind people of the tens of millions of people killed, of generations destroyed, of families in mourning. But I know that it is time finally to say that these tragedies should stop and to condemn the crimes of communism.

If we do not have the courage to do that, all this will happen again. In former socialist countries, many former communists turned into so-called democrats, hidden in political parties, and maybe they are just waiting for the right moment for the "luminous communist era to arise again". We cannot let them do it. The communist terror should be buried everywhere, once and for all.

Mr DRAGASSAKIS (*Greece*): The draft resolution that we discuss today has caused great concern to a large part of the public in my country, Greece. Principal social organisations, such as the Central Union of Municipalities and Communities, condemn this attempt to equate the ideology of communism with Nazism or fascism. They view it as an insult against the historical memory of the entire Greek nation, and the thousands of victims during the country's struggle against fascism. This point of view is also shared by the Athens Bar Association, the union of those imprisoned or exiled during the dictatorship, and by dozens of other social organisations.

I assure you that all those men and women who express these opinions have strongly criticised the regimes that the draft resolution under discussion refers to. Therefore, their opposition is not attributable to some kind of nostalgia for such regimes. On the contrary, their opposition reflects a profound concern for the future of democracy, free expression of ideas and respect of human rights. This attitude also reflects a concern for the future of the Council of Europe itself, an institution highly regarded in my country since, among other things, it has been a valuable supporter of the Greek democrats during the rough years of the dictatorship.

The draft resolution under discussion does not condemn the specific acts or facts that took place during Stalinism, i.e. situations already condemned by the Left. It inculcates ideas, convictions, even theoretical approaches or inquiries. It inculcates and condemns even the viewpoint according to which, in a class society, the class struggle is an inevitable and inextricable part of its life, the maker of its history. And it forms the arbitrary claim that such opinions inevitably lead to criminal practices.

I fear that the real target of those who thought up this draft resolution is not the specific regimes which have already been judged by history anyway. The real target is every criticising theory that questions the existing social status quo. The real targets are the new social movements that question the dominant new-imperialist world order. The real targets are all those who seek new paths towards a world of peace, equality and justice.

The risks of accepting what this draft resolution entails are obvious. In the 1960s, Greece was not facing any communist threat. Yet, in the name of such a fabricated threat, some colonels, encouraged by the United States, abolished democracy and imposed a military junta. In the early 1950s, the United States was not facing any communist threat. Yet, in the name of such an imaginary danger, McCarthyism emerged and grew. The Council of Europe must not favour such a prospect. On the contrary, it should block the way to all new forms of McCarthyism, by rejecting the draft resolution. Should the Council of Europe decide to become a judge of ideas and history, it will get itself into trouble, as its reliability will suffer a devastating blow.

Dear colleagues, I am not suggesting that we should throw the past into oblivion. I am suggesting that we should reject every ill-judged, flattening and wholly unhistorical attitude towards the past, regardless of the source from which it emanates. I am suggesting that we should protect the Council of Europe from engaging in fruitless conflicts that disorient us and distract us from the vital problems of our times. I am suggesting that we should vote with our minds turned towards the future, and not the past. Thank you.

