

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE CRIMES  
OF THE NAZI AND SOVIET OCCUPATION REGIMES IN LITHUANIA

**III. The Nazi Occupation of 1941-1944. The Holocaust and other Nazi Crimes**  
**III. 4. The Role of Institutions and Individuals Participating in the Political,  
Police, Military, Social and Legal Structures of the Occupying Power**

**The Catholic Church during the Period of Nazi Occupation in Lithuania**

**CONCLUSIONS**

*Approved on 20 April 2005*

The Commission discussed the report submitted by Dr. Arūnas Streikus “The Catholic Church as Institution during the Period of Nazi Occupation in Lithuania” and the conclusions of the study. The Commission also acquainted itself with the evaluations of this report by Bishop Dr. Jonas Boruta and by Prof. Liudas Truska, and has adopted the following Conclusions:

1. The LCC authorities, similarly to the majority of the Lithuanian public, welcomed the German army, since it had rescued them from the oppression and terror of the Soviet regime. The Anti-Bolshevik rhetoric in public statements of the bishops was useful also for the Nazi regime from the propaganda perspective.
2. Relations between the LCC authorities and the civil Nazi administration remained complicated and frequently strained. This was determined by the persistent restrictions of the religious activities, the non-compliance of bishops to unconditionally fulfil the wishes of the Nazi authorities, and their critique of some aspects of Nazi policy in Lithuania.
3. Polish clergy, monks, nuns and believers of the Vilnius archdiocese were repressed by the Nazi regime, partly because of their positions in Polish national and intellectual life, and partly because they played a more active role in the actions of the anti-Nazi resistance.

Five members of the Commission voted for:

4. The LCC as an institution failed to live up to its own moral standards. In common with other national churches, it had no clear policy on the persecution of the Jews, and was consequently silent. Nevertheless, a significant number of individual priests and believers protested the persecution of the Jews, and were active in efforts to rescue them. Most notably, Bishop Staugaitis issued a pastoral letter instructing his congregations not to cooperate in the killings, although he was the only bishop to do so.
5. The episcopate in Lithuania, as in other countries, also tried to speak for Jewish converts to Christianity. A bishops’ conference condemned the appropriation of Jewish property. And a number of priests condemned the massacres of Jews.

Three members of the Commission voted for:

4. The bishops attempted to use their authority to stop persecutions of Jews; however, unsuccessfully and without sufficient determination. It is impossible to document or to contradict memoirs and testimonies about the protests of bishops against killings of Jews by reliable historical sources. Bishop Justinas Staugaitis, at the beginning of the Nazi occupation, warned the congregation against participating in the killings. The episcopate also tried to intercede for christened Jews. Several priests from the provinces also condemned massacres of Jews publicly.
5. The bishops took an active part in the rescues of the individual Jews. The rescuers were also more than a hundred priests, monks and nuns, and many believers. The clergy also condemned the appropriation of Jewish property.

Chairman

**Emanuelis Zingeris**

Executive Director

**Ronaldas Račinskis**