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**Review of Vygantas Vareikis essay *Holocaust Preconditions. Antisemitism in Lithuania in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 19<sup>th</sup> Century through 1940***

The subject that the author has selected differs from other authors' works in one aspect: authors involved in research of other fields analyse areas that have strict time limits, while V.Vareikis set his purpose to scrutinize a period of nearly 150 years in terms of Antisemite atmosphere. Therefore this essay is larger in volume, as compared to the others, which is quite understandable and acceptable. However, parts of the text, especially those dealing with the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, should be abbreviated.

As Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Liudas Truska have presented their own reviews, which I find essentially acceptable, I would like to concentrate on several points.

Just like Liudas Truska, I am of the opinion that the Lithuanian case should be compared to the situation in other countries. Only through such a comparison could similarities and differences be exposed. What was the key characteristic of the Lithuanian Antisemitism? Did Lithuanian anti-Semites adopt more or less ideological clichés? To make it shorter: was there a unique Lithuanian Antisemitism or was it imported from abroad? Although V.Vareikis gives but secondary importance to this issue, personally I would have provided a clear viewpoint and an evaluation in an essay like that.

Like the other reviewers, I think that it is very important to establish methodological transparency: anti-Judaism, animosity towards the Jews on religious grounds, and Antisemitism are not the concepts that can be mixed up together in any context. The caesura of Antisemitism requires detailed explanation, as there is a common approach that the contemporary enlightenment tendencies manifested in the history of hostility towards the Jews have created something new, that in other words – the modern Antisemitism is an independent phenomenon quite different from the archaic forms of hatred of Jews that took its present shape in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, so it is as old as its name is. (Wilhelm Greive: *Geschichte des modernen Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, Darmstadt 1983, S.1 (*The History of Modern Antisemitism in Germany*)).

The same goes for Germany. V.Vareikis has no insight that Antisemitism at the very beginning was something common to the entire Europe (Gobineu, Chamberlain), and his statements on the examples from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Germany are too explicitly linked to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century German Holocaust. Moreover, when analysing the subject, V.Vareikis refers to Goldhagen's ideas that no science having enough self-esteem would accept (page 1). I would strongly recommend re-writing the preamble. If the Holocaust really was an exclusively German phenomenon and could be made possible only because the whole German population was absorbed by racist determination and was bent on killing, then the Commission's work really makes no sense at all.

This essay will add a lot to scientific research, as analysis of Antisemite air among the Lithuanian population during 1918 to 1940 may give us an impression like there was no Antisemitism before the war, which is actually not quite true. Here I can see no conflict with the ideas of L.Truska that the State had no Antisemite policy to follow. Just like L.Truska, I am of the opinion that the part about A.Smetona and his policy is too short and should be larger in volume. The fact that the Government did not pass any Antisemite laws is important, of course, and at that Lithuania is different from its neighbours Germany and Poland and other Eastern European states in a positive sense, however the population still displayed certain anti-Jewish moods that both were characteristic of the lower classes and found a place among the academic and economic public of the country.

In conclusion, I would like to add several small remarks: regarding the Judeo-Communism stereotype (p. 19): it is a phenomenon common to the entire Europe, the roots of which were revealed by, for instance, Andre Gerrits: Antisemitism and Anti-Communism: The Myth of "Judeo-Communism" in Eastern Europe, in: Eastern European Jewish Affairs 25, 1995, S.49-72.

Page 24: "Blood and earth" may not be considered an ideology, as this phrase, stemming from the "national ideology", was first of all applied to agriculture, and is not of immense importance to Antisemitism.

Page 17 and on: Regarding collaboration between the Lithuanians and the Jews after the year 1918, it should be pointed out that the Vilnius issue here played its role, as Lithuanians were expecting help from Vilnius Jews, thus trying to portray Lithuania a liberal and tolerant state as compared to Poland. Therefore, the closing of the ministry also has to be discussed in this context.

I find the definition, provided on page 27 sort of a propos, very important: if during the years of Smetona government there was a silent agreement that the Jews were not be allowed to hold a state post, this fact gains particular importance within the context of the first soviet occupation: If until 1940 there had been no Jews in the administration authorities, then the few that worked for the soviet occupants after June 1940 must have attracted a lot of attention. Bearing these circumstances in mind, the whole picture and the myth of the Jewish domination during 1940-1940 has obtained a peculiar load.

The essay of V.Vareikis is the reference point for further discussions and research.

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