

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.3. The Persecution of Non-Jews

III.3.5 Confiscation of Property and the Suppression of Cultural Life

Restrictions on Lithuanian Cultural Life

CONCLUSIONS

Approved on April 20 2005

The Commission discussed the report submitted by Linas Jašinauskas “Restrictions on Lithuanian Cultural Life” and the conclusions of the study. The Commission also acquainted itself with the evaluations of this report by Prof. Egidijus Aleksandravičius, Prof. Liudas Truska and Dr. Rimantas Zizas and has adopted the following Conclusions:

1. In Lithuania Nazis have executed the policy of restriction and disruption of cultural life of the country. Occupation government suppressed national self-awareness of the local population, annihilated and looted of cultural heritage of the country in an organized way, made obstructions for the functioning of the educational and culture institutions and sought to use them for the Germanisation, and dissemination of propaganda and National Socialist ideology.
2. At the beginning of occupation the Nazis have allowed the general high-schools and vocational schools, higher educational institutions and Universities to function in Lithuania. Most of Russian and Polish-language educational institutions were closed by the decrees of Lithuania’s Provisional Government and the occupation regime. Besides Lithuanian schools it was only primary Russian and Polish schools and the Vilnius Byelorussian-Russian gymnasium that was left to function in Lithuania. Throughout the occupation all the teachers who were Komsomol and the Communist party members were being killed and persecuted.
3. Occupation regime has gradually changed the high schools into the schools of vocational training, which were to prepare the workers and artisans needed by the Nazi regime. From the school year 1942-1943 an obligatory primary five-year school system has been introduced, which was to produce only candidates for vocational schools and for the higher-grade vocational schooling (5th to 7th year) with the aim to qualified workers. The Nazis had changed the structure of the high schools and narrowed the range of subjects. There were plans to make available only vocational studies for the local population.
4. The Nazis demanded from Educational Board of Lithuania to narrow the network of the primary and higher-education schools and the teachers’ seminaries.
5. The Nazis required spreading only Nazi ideology in the general and vocational schools. Striving to achieve these aims, Nazi authorities have enlarged the number of lessons in German, changed the programs and have forbidden using the textbooks of content contrary to the Nazi ideology.

6. From the very beginning of occupation, Nazis made obstructions for the functioning of Lithuanian high schools. The purpose of the Nazi occupation regime was to make high schools to educate only those specialists that were required for the management of Nazi military economy. For this end, Nazis planned to close certain Lithuanian high schools completely as well as cancel the operation of the Faculties of Theology, Philosophy Humanities, Law, Mathematics and Natural Sciences in the universities of Lithuania. Employing different approaches, they restricted the enrolment of new students and hindered the graduation of the existing students.

7. Nazis also disrupted the operation of Lithuanian schools indirectly. Units of German Army, war hospitals and institutions of occupation simply took over school buildings. While the schools were not allocated even minimal funds for acquiring writing and education materials, teachers and lecturers received low salaries; schoolchildren and students had to perform various duties and were recruited to auxiliary services of the German Army.

8. Retaliating for the failure to mobilize Lithuanian youth into SS Units, on 17-18 March 1943, Nazis closed the following Lithuanian higher education schools: Kaunas and Vilnius Universities, Academy of Sciences, Academy of Arts, Pedagogic University and National Philharmonic. Nazis also closed four teacher seminaries. Until the end of occupation, Nazis did not allow the closed higher education schools to reopen.

9. In Lithuania Nazis took command of country's publishers, printing-houses and enterprises of publication trade and distribution. During the occupation, book publishing was restricted and stringent censorship was imposed on press and any disseminated information. The said measures resulted in the reduced number of periodicals in the country, while the publishing of Lithuanian books and textbooks was nearly suspended, and Lithuanian population was deprived of freedom of speech and couldn't receive unbiased information on the events taking place both in Lithuania and the world.

10. The Nazi occupation government restricted Lithuanian musical life and theatre activities, limited the arrangement of cultural and educational events conducted by local people, but limited cultural life continued to exist. Productions of Jewish, Soviet, some Lithuanian and West European artists were removed from theatre and concert repertoires, while artists were instructed to perform only productions created by Germans.

11. Through the occupation period, especially from March 1943, the Nazis persecuted those, who corroborated with the Soviets or politically unreliable social and culture activists. During March 16-17, 1943 upon the closure of Lithuania's institutions of highest education, 46 well known Lithuanian intellectuals were arrested and deported to the Stuthoff Concentration Camp. The next action against Lithuanian intellectuals was during the April 29, 1943 when, in an attempt to suppress the underground press, 16 journalists and typography workers were arrested and sent to Stuthoff CC.

12. Lithuanian libraries and museums suffered from Nazi occupation. Books published during Soviet occupation as well as books by well-know writers and scientists were either removed from libraries and destroyed or taken to Germany.

Some Lithuanian museums had to find shelter in other places and because of Nazi looting and war museums have lost parts of their collections.

13. In Lithuania as well as in other occupied lands, Nazis looted cultural heritage. This was conducted by institutions of occupation regime. Also, individual Nazi officials acted wilfully. Valuable exhibits, works of art, memorial artefacts, rare books and devices were taken to Germany from Lithuania, like it was happening in other III Reich-occupied territories.

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