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**OPINION ON SPREAD OF ANTISEMITISM IN LITHUANIA DURING THE YEARS OF SOVIET OCCUPATION (1940-1941), AN ESSAY BY L.TRUSKA**

The essay by L.Truska, although somewhat chaotic in terms of contents layout, provides new data for the research of the burning and hurtful issue – both previous, and present attempts to justify involvement of the Lithuanian population in the Jew annihilation actions during the years of the Nazi occupation. One of the fake excuses is the assumption that part of the Lithuanian population was involved in said process during the period of the Nazi occupation as a response to the alleged mass participation by the Jewish population in Soviet repressions at the time of the first Soviet occupation. This assumption existed throughout the duration of the Nazi occupation, and as far as I know it was brought forth and supported by the official Nazi propaganda. Unfortunately, L.Truska's essay bears no reference to this fact. This assumption existed in the years that followed and is still alive among the older generation of our society. Therefore a lot of endeavour has to be made to prove just how unreasonable that assumption is. This requires impartial research.

The followers of the above assumption have to be shown that nearly the absolute majority of the Holocaust victims consisted of Jews – children, women, old people – that had done no harm to the State of Lithuania or to its people. They must be shown that the collective liability model simply cannot be applied to the specific and not-so-many crimes committed by Soviet collaborators (including those of Lithuanian nationality). I was and I am sure that this problem can only be solved both at the academic and popular level only after making an impartial research, and publishing detailed figures and names and figures of both Lithuanians and Jews that would collaborate with the Soviet authorities, and the numbers of Lithuanians involved in the killings of Jews. Any beatings around the bush, fuzzy reasoning will not help us abolish the stereotypes originated and supported by the Nazi propaganda. All this I laid down very clearly in my foreword to the conference *Catholic Church and Lithuanian-Jewish Relationship*, as held by the Lithuanian Catholic Science Academy in 1998.

Unfortunately, L.Truska mentioned in his essay that I approved of the opinion that this is the only way in which I see this problem solved. Regardless of everything I said in my foreword, L.Truska is searching new undercurrents. One of them is pretty obvious (page 3). So I accept such a reference by L.Truska to my publication as politically incorrect.

The same goes for the reference that L.Truska makes (out of any context as well) to the last sermon by priest J.Lauriūnas held in 1991 in Linkmenys at the ceremony of opening a memorial for Holocaust victims. Yes, there were people that collaborated with the Soviet regime, both Lithuanian and Jews. And quite a few Lithuanians were involved in the crime of the Holocaust. This we regret, but no morals or logic could justify mass annihilation of innocent people!

In addition to the above rather personal but very principal reproach, I would like to point out some of the inconsistencies that occur throughout L.Truska's essay. For instance, on page 12 he writes that in 1941 a synagogue was closed in Telšiai, where 200 students studied to be rabbis, while the authorities still would not touch the Catholic churches during the first Soviet occupation – obviously, here he refers to a Jewish school – a yeshiva. All of the Catholic schools, clerical primary and secondary schools, Telšiai and Vikaviškis priest seminaries, and the Faculty of Theology at Kaunas VDU were closed as early as during the first month of the Soviet occupation in 1940. Kaunas priest seminary was closed on January 8, 1941. The premises were seized together with chapels set up within. The same

resolution ruled for closing of Jewish clerical schools as well. Here there is no reason to maintain that the Soviet authorities were in favour of the Catholics rather than of the religious Jews. The authorities were hostile to both parties equally.

I think that the author should be more careful when equating (with no apparent justification whatsoever) the following statement from an Anti-Semite document of the Lithuanian Activist Front: "the Lithuanian Activist Front invalidates hospitality towards the Jewish national minority in Lithuania" with the statement: "outlaws" (page 17). The draft resolution should observe the authentic terminology rather than the overstated and biased one that L.Truska provides...

There are more exaggerations that reduce the impression of the essay as being objective, for instance: Lithuanians soon forgot their own collaborators, i.e. collaborators with the Soviet regime. The today's reality, when such collaborators are sought through magnifying glass and not to be forgiven, however, speaks to the contrary...

It would be good if the final copy of the document contained no such discrepancies, so that the essay could cure our memories by releasing them from the myths imposed by the occupants. So that there would be no justification for the unjustifiable.

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