

**Prof. Julius Šmulkštys**

On the research by Prof. Liudas Truska

**FOUNDATIONS FOR HOLOCAUST. SPREAD OF ANTISEMITISM IN LITHUANIA DURING THE YEARS OF SOVIET OCCUPATION (1940-1941)**

*Grounds for Holocaust*, a study by professor Liudas Truska is an important achievement in abolishment of the myth of the supposed mass involvement by the Jews in the Soviet occupation structures in the years 1940-1941. His resourceful and well supported analysis shows explicitly that such involvement by the Jews did not differ much from the involvement by the Lithuanian population, and that only the Russians the lived in or arrived to Lithuania from the Soviet Union made an exception here: their percentage in the occupation authorities was larger than that of any other nationality.

Personally, however, I can see certain problem in that part of the study that deals with the reaction of the Lithuanian population to the occupation. I am going to provide several examples that, in my opinion show that Professor Truska sometimes forgets all about the compulsory objective analysis based on facts and becomes entangled into what I should call pointless polemics.

There two points, on page 17 and page 28, where the Professor claims that the command of the LAF comprised representatives of all the political powers of Lithuania. At the same time he mentions that the LAF was dominated by the radicals: the Voldemarists, the new nationalists, and the young Catholics. First of all, the use of the words "political powers" and "represented" is somewhat dubious. Does this mean that in this sense the social-democrats were a political power and were represented in the LAF by representatives elected by the party?

I think that when referring to the organisation that was one of the sources of Antisemitism, Professor Truska should exercise more precision rather than hanging the terminology in thin air, as this may give the reader an impression that the LAF represented every political power in Lithuania, then it would be hard to find someone who was not an Anti-Semite in Lithuania at all.

Professor Truska speaks about intellectuals, writers, painters and artists that adored the occupants. They were many, although I would disagree with the statement the Professor makes that there were few people in the aforementioned groups that did not give at least some praise to Stalin and the Red Army, or donate some or another contribution to the new Lithuania. What does it mean – few? Five, ten per cent that did not pay their contribution? Here the Professor is missing precision again. He mentions seventeen names. Of course, there were more. But did eighty or ninety percent of the population praise the occupants? I do not think so.

Professor Truska's comment about Liudas Dovydenas also falls without the standards acceptable for a scientific research. Dovydenas, who was fond of dancing the "cossachok" (a Russian folk-dance) may have said that the Jews are to blame for everything, but the Professor does not specify the source of such knowledge of his. The footnotes point to Lithuanian People's Seimas V, 1985, although I doubt whether the records of the Seimas would hold such a statement concerning Jews.

Professor Truska claims that one of the reasons of the Lithuanian population's political opportunism demonstrated by the case of Dovydenas and the others is the idea that obedience would protect the nation from repressions. This however was but an illusion, as destruction of potential antagonists ".../ was programmed in the Bolshevik ideology". A

perspective of sixty years makes the belief that Lithuania will avoid repressions and maintain some autonomy quite unfeasible. However, in 1940 there were a lot of people, both in and out of Lithuania that were not aware of the essence of the Stalinist country. Censorship in Lithuania and the Soviet Union made it impossible to learn more about the actual situation in the country. But Lithuania was not the only one that missed information. Many people in the Western countries viewed the old Bolshevik trials at the time of cleansing of the party, the army, and the NKVD as an obvious and reasonable punishment of the traitors. This opinion was especially widespread among the intellectuals. So, is it just to blame Lithuanians for having illusions about obeying the Soviet Union? Besides, we might do well to remember that after the war had ended and illusions about the Soviet Union had dissolved, there people who would dance the metaphoric “cossachiok” and then become the real patriots at the time of the Atgimimas (“the Revival”).

Julius Šmulkštys