

Mission Statement

2 March 1999

The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (hereinafter "Commission") was formed pursuant to a Decree issued by President Valdas Adamkus on 7 September, 1998. This Decree proclaims as a national priority the search and determination of historical truth, which is fundamental for reconciliation among nations. At its first Meeting, on November 17, 1998, in Vilnius, the Commission (with all Members present) adopted a Statement, which is attached hereto.

Commission goals

The Commission will work in accordance with aforementioned Presidential Decree, the Laws of the Republic of Lithuania, and Government resolutions. The Commission should be seen as a crucial part of democratization, respect for human rights, and strengthening civil society in Lithuania. Accordingly, the Strategic Goals of the Commission are as follows:

- To fill in gaps in the modern history of Lithuania, by academic research and investigation conducted by specialists and experts, and disseminate the documented information both in Lithuania and abroad.
- To bring to Lithuania historical and sociological research, which has been generated in the west during the past fifty years, in essence to reverse the isolation and separation from historical information, which characterized the Soviet period.
- To publicize and disseminate the information generated, and inform citizens and students of all ages concerning the Holocaust and crimes committed by the Soviet regimes, and their consequences for Lithuanian society and the international community.

The Commission expects to achieve the following concrete results:

1. Research:

- Provide an inventory and bibliography of books, reports, exhibits, videotaped declarations of witnesses, photographs, etc.
- Detailed historical and archival research, and personal interviews, in Lithuania and abroad.
- The preparation, publication, and cataloguing of series of articles, reports, and documents concerning the historical events associated with the crimes committed in Nazi occupied Lithuania, particularly the Holocaust, and under the Soviet occupations. Amongst the topics to be covered are crimes against humanity, genocide, deportations, forced labor, cultural plunder, seized property and assets restitution, etc.

2. Calculation of Moral and Material Damage

Calculations of the moral, economic and physical damages from the two occupation periods, utilizing in part the previous work performed in this area.

3. Disseminations of Findings

- Support for the preparation of educational materials and curriculum for school students at all levels to promote study, discussion, and understanding of Lithuanian history during that period.
- Continuing series of informational seminars for general educational purposes.
- A series of conferences and debates for professionals in various disciplines concerning the Nazi and Soviet occupations. Scholars and officials from abroad will also be involved.
- A media campaign, using Internet as well, to disseminate the results of the Commission's work, and thereby increase the level of public understanding and national reconciliation.

Commission organization and operating procedures

The Basic structure of the Commission was approved at its first Meeting, on November 17, 1998. All members of Commission carry out their duties on a voluntary basis. Commission members can work at the Commission as employees. To become such, they must terminate any other employment. Their conditions of employment are determined at the Meeting of the Commission.

Membership: the Commission is chaired by Emanuelis Zingeris, Signer of the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Lithuania and Member of Parliament, and professor of History Liudas Truska, of the Vilnius Pedagogical University. The Commission is divided into two Sub-Commissions, to deal with the periods of Nazi and Soviet Occupation, headed by Professor L. Truska and E. Zingeris, respectively. Each Sub-Commission will have its own working group of experts, headed by Julius Šmulkštys and Dalia Kuodytė, respectively. Other Commission members will include Andrew Baker, Saulius Sužiedėlis, Joachim Tauber, Toma Birmontienė, Nicholas Lane, Yuriy Afanasyev, and Vytautas Radžvilas. The exact structure of the Commission will be established in the regulations. The Commission is scheduled to meet twice annually, to discuss presented research materials, make findings, review the work carried out between meetings, approve further work plans and projects and make other important decisions. All discussions and decisions of the Commission will be recorded/transcribed, and kept available at its offices.

Decision-making: if decisions are not made by consensus, a vote will be held on a majority basis. If Commission members do not agree with the decisions of the majority of the Commission, they can express a separate opinion.

In order to ensure sustainable and efficient work by the Commission, successful links among all members of the Commission, and cooperation and information sharing with similar commissions abroad, a permanent working group is being formed. This group includes professional researchers and managers, assisted by technical personnel. Commission members have overall responsibility for the work and output of the Commission, the professional researchers, and the staff. They appoint all employees, who are proposed by the Co-Chairmen of the Commission.

One of the two groups of professional researchers will investigate the Nazi occupation, particularly the Holocaust. and the other will investigate the Soviet Occupation. They will both work under the Scientific Secretary. The researchers will discuss operational and procedural issues with the Scientific Secretary, but substantive work falls under the jurisdiction of the Head of each Sub-Commission. The Scientific Secretary will have one full-time Assistant. Technical personnel will work under the Executive Director, who is also responsible for representing the Commission, preparing work plans and status reports, executing contracts, raising funds, and ensuring that the usage of funds is in accordance with the purposes of the Commission. The Executive Director will have one full-time Executive Assistant.

At full-strength, the *staff* will consist often full-time employees, who will carry out the day-to-day work.

Their responsibilities include:

- arranging Commission and other meetings,
- assisting with research and fieldwork,
- securing materials from abroad,
- helping to prepare reports,
- liaising with other institutions and constituents,
- working with the media,
- making translations, editing various texts,
- handling routine office functions.

The staff will assist both groups of researchers, although there may be some specialization. For book-keeping and the preparation of financial reports, a part-time finance specialist should be employed.

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania will provide sufficient working premises for the Commission and its staff. Sufficient office furnishings and equipment will also be required. The latter includes computers, modems, telephone and fax machines, a copying machine, a scanner, and video equipment. Basic capacity for desktop publishing is considered indispensable.

While carrying out its work, the Commission expects to secure technical assistance from Lithuanian and international experts. During the initial phases, it would be useful to secure the services of an individual familiar with similar Commissions in other countries, who can assist with the design and preparation of organizational flow charts, working procedures, scopes of work for staff, and terms of reference consultants/researchers. Outside expertise will also contribute to strategic planning, management, fund-raising, and ensuring that the Commission members and staff learn from and make full use of the experiences of other similar institutions around the world.

Commission funding

The work of the Commission has been given national priority, therefore as with all areas of priority, funds shall be provided by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Nevertheless, other sources of funding are also foreseen, including donations from individuals and organizations. Another potential means for raising additional funds is the establishment of a Non-Governmental Organization, either a Foundation or Public Enterprise. This could serve as a supplemental funding mechanism, whereby private citizens and international donors can make financial contributions to support specified Commission objectives and activities.

Conclusion

The Commission has a crucial role to play in the determination of Lithuania's historical truths during the twentieth century, educating the populace, and promoting reconciliation and respect for human rights. It is hoped that the Commission will receive many kinds of financial and non-financial assistance from a wide range of sources, official and private, inside and outside Lithuania.