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Kaunas Mayor Who Met Mortal Remains of Brazaitis Rejects Criticism Over Honoring Head of Provisional Government

BNS and lrytas.lt information
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Kaunas mayor Andrius Kupčinskas went to Vilnius on Thursday to meet the incoming mortal remains of Juozas Brazaitis, head of the Lithuanian Provisional Government in 1941, and rejected criticism by a Jewish group over his honoring the deceased, who is to be reburied Sunday.

The urn containing the mortal remains were met at the Vilnius airport at noon and are being taken from there to Kaunas, where a funeral ceremony is planned for Sunday.

“We as a nation should appreciate the efforts by our Provisional Government to restore national independence. It seems strange to me that while there is no official proof, they are trying to identify the honorable Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis with pro-Nazi activity,” the mayor of Kaunas told BNS.

Kupčinskas sought to remind critics, including the ambassador from Israel, that no charges were brought against Brazaitis when an investigation was performed in the US Congress [sic, legislative branch doesn't bring charges -trans].

“In 1974 a US congressional subcommittee dropped the investigation and did not approach legal institutions, did not find proof that the activity of the Provisional Government was in some connected with pro-Nazi activity,” he said.

“Sure, the larger countries are trying in their own way to re-write history. Brazaitis himself also suffered from the Nazi as much as the Soviet aggression. It is rather complicated for the state of Lithuania to propagate its authentic history,” he continued.

Critics usually base their arguments on “completely categorical judgments in certain publications, but there are no official documents,” Kupčinskas claimed.

On Thursday the Lithuanian Jewish Community released a statement saying was insulted by “events surrounding the reburial ceremony of this controversial politician.”

“This figure is connected with the activity of the puppet Provisional Government of Lithuania, with passing repressive and discriminatory laws in order to please the Nazi regime, and also with the calls by the Lithuanian Activist Front to incite mass murder of Jews which led to the execution of barbaric ‘justice’ by the mob,” the statement continued.

“By officially commemorating these sorts of people, Lithuanian Holocaust education programs and the historical truth presented in them are distorted. It is our opinion that this compromises contemporary Lithuania [as a whole]. We are deeply saddened that the Lithuanian state has expressed such disrespect to her citizens who were murdered here and who survived the Holocaust,” the statement from the Lithuanian Jewish Community said.

Brazaitis died in the USA in 1974. He was one of the leaders of the anti-Soviet resistance and the Lithuanian Activist Front in 1940 and 1941. From June to August of 1941 he was

the head [acting prime minister-trans] of the Provisional Government of Lithuania, which was declared after [during, as part and parcel of-trans] the June Uprising. Later he was an active participant in the unarmed anti-Nazi resistance.

He had the surname Ambrazevičius before the war but changed it to Brazaitis to avoid arrest. In 1944 as the second Soviet occupation [liberation-trans] drew near, he went to Germany. In 1951 he moved to the United States.

During the German occupation from 1941 to 1944, the Nazis and their collaborators murdered more than 90 percent [96%-trans] of the over 200,000 Jews living in Lithuania.