

Dear reader, I would guess that you have figured out that it's possible to insert the comma elsewhere, and to get "To write (it) is forbidden, (to) forget". I cannot do that, I am not able to forget because of my relatives, those who were dug under - not buried - in the Rainiai forest in Geruliai on the way to Šiauliai, in a gravel pit on the way to Viešvėnai or Luokė, in Telšiai behind the old stadium, there, not far from the railroad, there, in an empty field in Veiviržėnai, there, not far from a forest and a flowing brook. Lovely places, right? A forest, a brook, a railroad, a stadium...

I recall our journey to Freedom, how we stood along the Baltic Way, and the lovely speeches that we gave: about Lithuania, Goodness, Warmth, Tolerance, Compassion, Memory. We all dreamt of a free Lithuania. And later, someone got up onto a barrel and passionately vowed: "I won't clean shoes for the Jews!", even though no-one had asked for that, and no-one needs it. Another one emerged onto the street with swastikas, and began to yell "Lithuania for the Lithuanians". Since they wanted to sing a song about the stick and the little Jew, we let the little neo-Nazis loose to wander Gedimino Prospect. We watched the theatrics of an actor in court squeezing out a tear - have mercy on a poor old man, after all he's now reached an honourable age and does not feel well. But someone in Lithuania forgot (or pretended to forget?) that they drove the same old people - of another nationality - to their death; that they smashed their heads in with rifle butts, that they defiled young women before throwing dirt over them, that they took small children by the feet and bashed their heads in against posts. Hard to believe, isn't it? But that's how it was. The degenerates boasted that it wasn't worth the bullet, they'd finish them off with their hands. And after the slaughter was over, there were those who paraded around the villages in new expensive coats. And others who just signed "little papers" and passed laws and decrees that Lithuania was no place for a Jew, and those who with their guns innocently wandered around sheds, fences, newly dug up pits. While consciences remained silent - and why not? After all, a Jew isn't a human being!

Being a teacher, I will first take us into a school. To where respect

teachers work to teach children goodness and warmth to their fellow man. To where Tolerance Centres have been set up, and teachers taken to Israel. Where they were taught, shown, explained how to talk with young people, how to present a lesson, so that it would never happen again. So that afterwards numbers of innocent victims wouldn't have to be counted, so that people wouldn't be thrown into pits, ditches and marshes. Big money was invested. We wrote and wrote textbooks, and still couldn't write it all

## TO WRITE, IT IS FORBIDDEN TO FORGET

down. We trembled and trembled, a sentence here, a sentence there, always with fear, always with caution. What will they say, who will they throw out of their job?

I imagine we need some examples here.

A well-known Vilnius gymnasium. The start of a math class. Enter a colleague, who begins the lesson not with "a+b", but with an "innocent" anecdote: "How does a stick differ from a Jew?" It seems they do, quite a bit even. When you burn a Jew he yells, but when you burn a stick - it doesn't. A very funny anecdote. An intelligent and educated teacher. Do you think I kept quiet? You're wrong. I told the director, but the head of the gymnasium kept it quiet that time. And continues to do so to this day.

Another class. At another gymnasium. Physics. Albert Einstein, the theory of relativity. Naturally, not everything is easy to understand. There's a forest of hands. Instead of effort and assistance on the part of the teacher - a gold-class comment: "You're all stupid, like the Jews". Obviously just like Albert Einstein (ha ha ha).

Another example. Mrs. Danguolė Jurgaitienė is a teacher with a high education and forty years of teaching experience. In her book "The Jews in Utena" (Utena, "Kamonada" publ., 2009, 300 copies), D.Jurgaitienė, as a great "expert" on Jewish customs and traditions, writes: "If a virgin died unmarried, they would warm up her corpse and marry her to a widower. He had to spend the first night with the deceased. The bride's parents would give him her trousseau."

There's more: "On entering the synagogue, they would leave their shoes outside" (it's not clear he-

re, is she writing about Jews or Muslims?). "A hired Lithuanian woman would line them up, and inside the synagogue itself she would wipe the Jews' noses, for they couldn't do that themselves on the Sabbath."

The author is an expert with extraordinary talents, a consultant on questions of Jewish life. I'd say she merits an award. The woman tried so hard, presented such interesting material, travelled so broadly to collect her information.

I don't want to offend anyone, but neither do I want to listen to

rubbish - that nothing happened, how long can it go on... etc. They must, at least once, dare to see the truth, the historical truth. To talk openly, to note real historical facts, and to admit the mistakes of both sides of the conflict. Only historical truth, only a round table can save us all and make us a little bit different.

And now, dear reader, you will have to be patient and endure, for I will be writing and retelling horrible things. Abraham Sutzkever, "Vilna Ghetto" (2008): "The first to disrobe was the rabbi. In the light of the bonfire his gaunt and wasted body looked like a wax prayer candle. Then I undressed. My hands were shaking, but I finally pulled off my threadbare clothes. The last to undress was a boy. He held his garments in his hands, and didn't know what to do with them. A German ordered us to put everything in a pile. We had to dance and sing around the bonfire. To sing in Russian, only unfortunately the rabbi didn't know Russian and was silent. One of the Gestapo ran up and pushed the rabbi towards the burning fire, the smoke and flames licked him, there was a charred smell. For the first time an "oy" escaped from his lips. We were beaten, and forced to tear Torah scrolls into scraps and to throw them onto the fire; they tied one Torah around the rabbi's head. One of the Torah scrolls fell out of a German's hands, covered and smothered the fire, after which the flame blazed at us with an even more terrifying strength."

I can only safely say that the rabbi did not survive, and remains eternally buried in the Paneriai forest. There were more than one or two such rabbis in Lithuania.

And the tragedy of the Kovno rabbi? Were the rabbis also communists who invited Soviet authorities to Lithuania? That boy who was humiliated at the bonfire, was he also a communist?

I want to ask who they were, the ones who carried it out, who observed, saw, laughed and enjoyed?

In front of me is another little book - "Lithuanian police". Author Petras Stankeras (Vilnius, 1998). I read and can't believe. I quote: "The author seeks to at least somewhat "colour" one of the "whi-

te stains" in Lithuania's history." And how should one colour the blood stains of innocent people and the "heroic deeds" of Lithuania's policemen in 1941 in Telšiai, Plungė, Kėdainiai, or elsewhere? On page 204 we find twenty listed battalions: Nr. 1-15, 250, 251, 252, 254, 255. Yes, there were really 20 of them: 332 officers, 1773 sergeants, 6275 rank and file soldiers - a total of 8,380 men. What did they do, where did they go, what kinds of "night missions" did they find themselves on? What orders did they carry out? Honourable reader, are there any alternative questions, any other responses and commentaries?

That's not all. From the same book: "On September 19, 1941, Vilnius district commissar SS Sturmbannführer H.Wulff ordered sergeant Kalendra to herd all Vilnius district Jews into ghettos, and to have them guarded by Lithuanian police." Lithuanian police moved the Jews out of their flats. One guarded, another drove them out of their flats, a third stole their property, and the fourth held a rifle-butt in his hands. Can anyone deny it? Not likely. Because it continues: "Vilnius residents were pleased that the Jews were being moved to a separate residential area (and why not? - take what you want: coats, dishes, furniture - M.J.). Only some of the Poles felt very sorry for the Jews, and some of them cried as they watched their fellow citizens and neighbours being taken away."

Finally we come to the facts. The People's Parliament 1940: 79 deputies - 4 Jews. People's Government: 15 members - 2 Jews. LCP CH bureau 1940-1941: 11 members - here I have to disappoint all foul-mouthed anti-Semi-

tes: 1 Jew. City and district party committee secretaries: Lithuanians - 77 percent, Russians - 19 percent, Jews - 4 percent (L.Truska, "Lithuania In the Time of the Bolshevik and Nazi Violence"). Who, you'll say, should we believe - scholar L.Truska, or the young, uneducated (at least on this question) neo-Nazis? NKVD orders during 1940-1941 still exist in the Lithuanian VRM archives. The orders note 279 workers in this system (not including attending staff). Of them 148 were Russian, 111 Lithuanian, 20 Jewish.

I love Lithuania and its moral people, and I know many of them. The majority of Lithuanian citizens are educated people who know a lot, but are afraid, and don't dare. After all, how can one support the Jews in Lithuania? You'd bring shame upon your own head, and upon your family.

To finish - several more sentences. Another book - "From That Time and Place" (p. 244): "A TIME magazine correspondent writes: "There are no words to describe the terrible suffering and horror of Belsen, and even I, who have seen everything with my own eyes, was unable to ultimately understand - too many horrors, all principles of humanitarianism trampled - and therefore felt only generally stunned. Spread out under the pines lay corpses, not two, three, or several dozen, but thousands. The living tore the last rags off the dead in order to build fires, and brewed soup out of pine needles and branches. Tiny children, barely alive, no longer had the energy to cry, and huddled against the rotting corpses of their mothers."

Do I need to write any more? Is something still not clear to someone? Should I write something more about the Holocaust industry? Say something else to the anti-Semites, or add something to the "Delfi" [website - transl.] commentary? Perhaps someone could translate the last lines for the Iranian president? Is there something still missing? Please, it's not difficult. But I can promise that the articles won't be called "To write (it) is forbidden, (to) forget", but, unfortunately, "To write! It is forbidden to forget!"

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