

YEAR OF COMMEMORATION OF HOLOCAUST VICTIMS IN LITHUANIA

On September 21, 2010, the Lithuanian Parliament passed a decree declaring 2011 the year of the Commemoration of Holocaust Victims in Lithuania: "In expressing its sincere respect to the victims of the Holocaust, in emphasising that the loss of the Jews of Lithuania during the time of the Nazi occupation is a huge and tragic part of our common history, in denouncing the genocide of the Jews that was carried out in Lithuania by the Nazis and their collaborators during the time of the Nazi occupation, in continuing the policy consolidated in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania of the harmonious cohabitation of nations and the fight against any manifestations of anti-Semitism, Parliament has declared 2011 the

year of the Commemoration of Holocaust Victims in Lithuania."

The decree suggests that a programme dedicated to the commemoration of Holocaust victims and the honouring of fellow citizens who fought against fascism and who rescued Jews, and to the restoration and preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of Lithuania's Jews, be prepared and confirmed by November 1, 2010, and that funds be found to finance said programme.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

The Lithuanian Jewish community has not, and never will forget its robbed, tortured, and murdered parents, brothers and sisters, close and distant relatives - all of the Lithuanian Jews who were killed by the Na-

zis and their local collaborators. The spiritual memory of the Jewish people embraces not a year or a hundred years, but thousands of years. They carry that memory and grief in their hearts daily, and they hand it down to their children and grandchildren.

The question of the preservation of the physical commemoration of the tragedy remains. Specifically - the appropriate maintenance of nearly two hundred memorials and graves of Holocaust victims, as well as old Jewish cemeteries. Regional Jewish communities take care of these sacred places, but they are small, and they don't have the means to secure and maintain the memorials and graveyards, as well as to eliminate the consequences of attacks by vandals.

To Chair of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, Irena Degutienė

Honourable Madam Irena Degutienė, The Jewish Community of Lithuania thanks the Lithuanian State for its decision on September 21, 2010 to declare a year of commemoration of the residents of Lithuania who became victims of the Holocaust. The decision includes expressions of sincere respect for the victims of the Holocaust. We trust that the Lithuanian public will become more familiar not only with the history of the Holocaust, but also with the history of the Jews of Lithuania, and that the Lithuanian government, together with

the Jewish Community of Lithuania and other interested organisations will develop a programme to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

Several days after this decision, on September 28, 2010, the Lithuanian Parliament passed a decision to declare 2011 the year of the commemoration of the defense of freedom and great losses.

The Jewish Community of Lithuania has already declared its evaluation of the events of 1941 and of the provisional Lithuanian government, as well as of the no-

tion of two genocides (declaration copy attached). We believe that the title "Year of Commemoration of Great Losses" is also related to the Jews of Lithuania.

It should not be forgotten that the mass killing of Jews began in June 1941. We believe that the Jewish community should be included in the programme for the Year of the Commemoration of Great Losses, and that the events should be co-ordinated with the Jewish Community of Lithuania.

Respectfully,
Simonas Alperavičius