



ISSUES, DISCUSSIONS, OPINIONS

CRIMINAL CODE NOW
A HISTORY GUIDE

Why did the debates about Lithuania's history suddenly, as if by agreement, stop? Can it be that once again, as in Soviet times, one cannot freely discuss questions of history or express one's own opinion? Why? For fear of the historical truth? A wish to ignore failures and defeats? A declared taboo to research them? Can it be that time in Lithuania has reverted to when only the one opinion - the official one - was permitted? In those days any another opinion was "false" and punishable: "the disobedient ones" were accused of slander against Soviet authority, and imprisoned.

Unfortunately, today there is a serious explanation for the silence of Lithuanian historians: an amendment to Article 170-2 of the Lithuanian Criminal Code came into effect on July 20, 2010. It put an end to discussions about the issues of Lithuanian history from 1940 to 1990 that are specifically related to genocide. The CC Article unequivocally states that there were two genocides. And when issues of history are resolved not by historians but by judges, then the historians could face CC issues.

A.Kasparavičius was still able to express his opinion. All others, including historians in Lithuania, now need to be careful, and to speak of the genocide in Lithuania either as it is laid out in the CC Article, or not at all.

A CHANCE TO CARRY OUT
JUSTICE

The Lithuanian historian A.Kasparavičius writes: "During twenty years of independence, Lithuania prosecuted Second World War criminals who carried out the genocide, very slowly." According to him, "in many cases, investigations organised by the prosecutor's office, and court procedures, were quite formal, and did not deal with the essentials. At times they even resembled sabotage."

The prosecutor's office did have a chance to carry out justice. In the beginning of the 1990s, fourteen individuals suspected of crimes outside the statute of limitations were deported from America to independent Lithuania because they had deceived immigration authorities when emigrating to the USA after the Second World War. They should have been tried in Lithuania. But...

But local justice turned into something akin to a company of lawyers that defeated both Temide, and the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, which had demanded that war criminals be punished according to the law. Of the fourteen who had been deported from the USA to Lithuania, two were tried for many years, and were found guilty post-humously. Only one was found guilty while still living, but he was absolved from carrying out his sentence. An assistant in the murder of Jews, he left the court building a free man, and walked out into the main street of Vilnius, where he was greeted with applause and joyful embraces by a crowd of neo-Nazis who had organised a demonstration with flags and placards in honour of the "hero".

That is how local prosecutors and judges behaved regarding individuals who had, in the eyes of honest people throughout the world, trampled on the honour and dignity of their country.

"The responsibility for this belongs with the prosecutor's office: with its former and present heads. And with politicians, who are, in the first place, responsible for the functioning of state institutions," - writes A.Kasparavičius.

WHERE WAS THE STATE
OF LITHUANIA BACK THEN?

To agree with a statement by A.Kasparavičius that, "there was no State of Lithuania during the time of the Holocaust - neither a government nor any other sovereign institutions", and that, "Lithuania was occupied by the Soviets and then by the Nazis" - is the equivalent of wiping out an essential episode of history. After the Soviet authorities fled Lithuania, and before the absolute

Nazi government took power, Kaunas was home, for a month and a half, to a Provisional Lithuanian government (PLG), which from its first to its last day was collaborationist and pro-Nazi.

the Nazis, but they did not stand in the way of the restoration of the former inter-war local administration, which they single-mindedly then controlled. The structure of the local administration was national, but

article, the director of the Centre states that she does not delve "into the author's metaphysical reflections on the scale of the blame of the Lithuanians who took part in the Holocaust".

HISTORY - EDUCATION
OR MODERN POLITICS?

On June 27 of this year, two Lithuanian internet websites - "Delfi.lt" and "Voruta.lt" - published an article by known historian Algimantas Kasparavičius, entitled "The Holocaust in Lithuania: an early forgotten history" ("Holokaustas Lietuvoje: istorija, kurią anksti užmiršti").

The Lithuanian historian's thoughts on the fate of his homeland, on the historical processes that took place in Lithuania during the 20th century, on present-day Lithuania, on the scale of the responsibility of Lithuanians who participated in the Holocaust, on the responsibility of academic historians for their work, and many other issues, were met by the intellectual elite and the country's community of historian educators with a six-week long silence.

On June 24, 1941, the provisional Lithuanian government, which had been created by the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) and "partisan" headquarters, issued a proclamation to the Lithuanian nation in the pages of the "To Freedom" ("Į Laisvę") newspaper, which stated: "We are especially grateful for the march of the invincible German army towards the East." And further: "Hitler's mission is of a worldwide scale, and its meaning can be very well understood, accepted positively, and supported sincerely."

Banditry, and the plundering and mass killing of Jews in Lithuanian towns and villages began even before the Nazi occupation. It is clear from the minutes of a government meeting on June 27, 1941, that it had been informed of "the exceptionally brutal torture of Jews at the Kaunas 'Lietūkis' garage". The PLG reacted to this information by declaring: "Regardless of all the measures that must be taken against the Jews for their communist activities and their obstruction to the German army, partisans and local residents are to avoid public execution of the Jews." The PLG, acting in the name of the Lithuanian nation, not only did not condemn the violence against peaceful Jews, it confirmed that Jews should and must be killed, but that public massacres and disturbances should be avoided.

The Provisional Government, and the June uprising, were organised by the LAF, an organisation that had been established by former Lithuanian ambassador to Germany, K.Skirpa. During his time in Berlin, he had collaborated closely with the chief headquarters of the Nazi land forces and the Nazi German military intelligence.

There are quite a few lawyers from the PLG in present-day Lithuania. In 2000, the Lithuanian Parliament passed a law acknowledging pro-Nazi PLG as a legitimate institution, but because world opinion denounced it, the decree was not signed by then-president Valdas Adamkus. Therefore the historian's categorical statement that, "there was no State of Lithuania during the time of the Holocaust", does not conform to reality.

One could agree with A.Kasparavičius' statement that, historically, Lithuania is not connected to the ideology of the total annihilation of Jews. But in practice... anti-Semitism has existed in Lithuania since olden times, and it has not yet disappeared. The ideology of the total annihilation of Jews came to Lithuania from Germany; it was disseminated by the pre-war Nazi press, and through propaganda leaflets and instructions of how to prepare to take over power under the leadership of LAF headquarters.

The PLG, acting in the name of the Lithuanian nation, affirmed the discriminatory anti-Semitic orders, including the shameful "conditions regarding the Jewish situation".

A.Kasparavičius writes that there were no "other official institutions" (i.e., Lithuanian government) in Lithuania during the time of the Nazi occupation. It is true that the central government was taken over by

its activities were characteristically pro-Nazi. It included national security police battalions, and so called civil defence and labour security groups which maintained close ties with the Nazis, and which took part in the "final solution of the Jewish question".

The mass killing of the Jews inflicted a deep psychological trauma throughout the Lithuanian population, and its painful consequences are felt today both by Lithuanians and Jews, though by each nation in its own way. Healing can take place only via mutual dialogue. Unfortunately, quite a few public figures in Lithuania are trying to discourage this type of dialogue. Instead, they seek to deepen and widen the rupture in relations between the two nations that was created during the time of the Holocaust.

No-one has studied the psychological consequences of the Holocaust in Lithuania, so there is no point at this time in talking about any kind of systematic endeavours to overcome them.

Recently, Junona Berznicki defended her thesis, "The effect of the consequences of Nazi repressions on the second generation of the Jewish community of Lithuania", at the department of general psychology in the faculty of philosophy of Vilnius University. This appears to be the first (and incidentally fruitful) attempt to research the psychological influence of a historical event on a generation that was born and raised after the war. It is probable that further work in this direction could help to discover more effective ways of achieving mutual reconciliation.

AN ADMINISTRATOR'S
OPINION

Six weeks later, a response to A.Kasparavičius appeared on the internet, in the form of an article by T.B.Burauskaitė, director of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre (further - Centre). The director's article was not unexpected, and not surprisingly, she responds to the criticism which A.Kasparavičius' article directs at the Centre and its subunit - the Museum of Genocide Victims (further - MGV).

According to A.Kasparavičius, preconceived opinions and prejudices basically hinder the Centre from carrying out a scientific study of Lithuanian pre- and post-war history, and reflect on the content of the MGV exhibition, which distorts the true face of history. "We still have too primitive an understanding of the problem of the Shoah in Lithuania. We have not yet reflected on and acknowledged the killing of the Jews in Lithuania as part of our repentance" - claims the historian. And he is right.

T.B.Burauskaitė refuses to discuss with A.Kasparavičius the presentation of Lithuanian history in the work of the Centre and the Museum of Genocide Victims. As an administrator, she basically tries not to agitate any of the scientific issues that arise when researching Lithuanian history from 1939 to 1990, and endeavours to prove that her institution functions, in principle, correctly and irreproachably. In reference to A.Kasparavičius'

WHEN WILL THE TRUTH
BE TOLD ABOUT
THE "BATTALIONS"?

T.B.Burauskaitė refers to as "metaphysical" (i.e., abstract, beyond the physical, fanciful) the claims by A.Kasparavičius that Lithuania "thus far has not succeeded in even tolerably researching the topic of the Jew-shooters". And she disputes A.Kasparavičius' opinion that, "there is not a single monograph or dissertation that dispassionately and reasonably analyses the issue of those sadly infamous Lithuanian civil defence battalions, researches their structure and social conditions, their 'deeds' in Lithuania, Byelorussia, and Russia. How many people took part in the executions, how many assisted, did the public support them?"

T.B.Burauskaitė rebuffs A.Kasparavičius' claim by presenting the results of a study on the activities of Lithuanian police battalions serving the Nazis: "Back in 2000, a work published by the Centre included an article entitled 'Genocide and Resistance' by Dr. Arūnas Bubnys, that was dedicated to the history of the 252nd battalion. These battalions guarded the Majdanek camp in Poland, and in that way played an indirect role in carrying out the genocide," - writes T.B.Burauskaitė.

How is one to understand the reference to "these battalions", if only the 252nd is mentioned? Coincidence, or a Freudian slip of the tongue? And why "indirect"? Is it possible that the duties of a "guard" have yet to be defined? Is it possible that Lithuanians do not know that the most disgusting sadists and murderers were chosen to serve as guards at concentration camps, that as "students" they were taught to organise man-hunts, drive prisoners, carry out shootings, etc. ? And that living human beings were used as "teaching aids" for the "shooting lessons"?

"In a 2006 publication dedicated to the history of the 1(13) Lithuanian police battalion, A.Bubnys ascertained that, together with the German Gestapo, this battalion killed no fewer than 36,000 Lithuanian and foreign Jews. Approximately 23,000 Jews were killed in Kaunas, about 11,600 in Lithuania, circa 1,400 in Byelorussia," - writes the director of the Centre. Also that, "the Centre's historian Alfredas Rukštenis researched the activities of the 2(12) Lithuanian police battalion, and ascertained that this battalion destroyed 15,452 Jews in more than fifteen sites in Byelorussia."

So, during 2000-2010, historians at the Centre determined that two out of twenty Lithuanian police battalions annihilated 34,000 Jews in Lithuania, and 16,852 in Byelorussia. Another battalion stood guard at the Majdanek death camp. Do they know the names of those who served in the three battalions? During which period did they kill those 50,852 people? What did they do until the end of the war, and where did they mysteriously "disappear to" after the war?

How did another 180,000 Jews disappear from Lithuania during 1941-1944? How many in fact we-

re there? Less? More? Perhaps they were killed without being counted and without being asked their names?

Where, and how many Jews did the "partisans", "activists", and ordinary gangs of robbers kill during those few days before the Nazi "ordnung", i.e., organised destruction, was put into place? How many were killed in carrying out the "ordnung"? Which Lithuanian disciplinary battalions were so good at killing unarmed Jews that they were "awarded" to foreign commands - to exterminate Jews in the Vinica district in Ukraine, and in Russian and Polish territories? Were they not there as well? How many years will it take to research the "battle grounds" and "heroic deeds" of the other seventeen police battalions? Were there more than seventeen? Less? Will the terrible "accounting" of the killing of the Jews of Lithuania ever be drawn up? Will the lists of the victims of the genocide of the Jews ever be reconstituted? No? Why not? Is it because this is all just "metaphysical", fanciful information?

It took the Centre nearly fifteen years to determine the nature of the activities of only three out of twenty police battalions. How much time will it take to study the criminal activities of the others? 50-70 years? Does someone still hope that, in time, the greatest mass crime in the history of Lithuania will be forgotten? The Jews have preserved the memory of enslavement in Egypt for thousands of years. Can it be that someone still hopes that the new generations will forget the Holocaust?

MUST THE CRIMINALS
BE NAMED?

It is rather strange to read in the text of serious historian A.Kasparavičius, a statement that, "when it comes to responsibility for the Holocaust in Lithuania, we can only refer to concrete criminals, their numbers, and their crimes. In no way can we include the nation, society, country." Our question to the historian: who is accusing the entire Lithuanian nation, society, country, for the genocide of the Jews?

We have written more than once in our paper on the etymology of the word "Jew-shooter" ("žydšaudis"), and we are aware that Lithuanian linguists know that this term does not have Jewish roots.

The Jews of Lithuania have not, and do not accuse all of the Lithuanian nation of anything. They accuse and condemn the killers - whose names have not yet been determined. In whose interest is it that they remain unknown? They should in fact be revealed, even if only to bring to an end the claims by instigators that there are those who accuse an entire nation.

The Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel carried out a huge, praiseworthy study that established the names of concrete people who took part in the killing of Lithuanian Jews. Lists of the killers were published in the "Crime & Punishment" magazine in 1999. The magazine, which included an appeal to the Lithuanian president, was brought to Lithuania. But even the president was silent. Why? Had he nothing to say? Did he think that everything would be forgotten? Were other intentions being fostered with regard to the named individuals? The lists remained shrouded in graveyard silence in Lithuania in 1999.

In 2009, when the lists were published on the internet, on the www.lithuanianjews.org.il website, there was such an uproar, that one would think they'd emerged for the very first time. Five Parliament members demanded that Israel be held responsible, even though the Association of Lithuanian Jews is not the State of Israel, but a public society.

A.Kasparavičius is interested in the issue of the lists of killers, but at the same time, he makes a strange statement for a historian: "There's probably no need for special lists of Jew-shooters in Lithuania". And he urges that, "history not be turned into an ideological show or exhibition process".

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HISTORY - EDUCATION OR MODERN POLITICS?

(Continued from p.6)

"One gets the impression from A.Kasparavičius' article that the Centre is preparing lists of Jew-shooters, which it intends to use for an ideological show or exhibition process," - complains T.B.Burauskaitė.

In fact, she explains to her readers, the Centre does not make up(!) lists of Jew-shooters, it only checks(!) "to what degree the lists of Lithuanian Jew-shooters that are released in Israeli publications reflect reality". And that it does so not of its own volition but "under instructions by the Lithuanian Parliament". In other words, the historians at the Centre are forced to undertake this by the Parliament, i.e., independent scientific historians have been turned into auditors of someone else's work. "These kinds of studies have not been carried out in Lithuania, and no-one can answer the question, how many of Lithuania's population did in fact take part in the Holocaust," - writes T.B.Burauskaitė. - "Some claim that there were several hundred, others that there were several thousand (A.Kasparavičius believes the latter), and others still (usually historians and publicists from Israel), that there were even several tens of thousands."

Does it not seem, from T.B.Burauskaitė's claims, that for scholars researching the Holocaust in Lithuania, lists of killers of Jews would have continued to remain *tabula rasa*, had they not been published in Israel?

So why does Lithuania continue not to have its own lists? Is it a fear of 212,000 unarmed Jewish murderers? Are lists of individuals who served in the criminal battalions that killed hundreds of thousands of Lithuanian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, and Polish Jews no longer needed?

Many murderers were tried by Soviet organs after the war - not for the genocide of the Jews of Lithuania, but for "the massacre of peaceful Soviet citizens". In 1946 Stalin prohibited the shooting of murderers, and they were deported to Siberia instead. After serving their sentence, many of them returned to Lithuania. Perhaps this is why there aren't even any lists?

"Data found and analysed in archival documents on 2,371 individuals named in the aforementioned lists allows one to ascertain that 533 (about 22.8%) of them directly and indirectly contributed to the Nazi implemented genocide of the Jews in Kaunas, Kretinga, Telšiai, Raseiniai, Ukmergė, Alytus,

Biržai, and Lazdijai districts," - is the Centre director's soothing explanation.

We would like to hope that the research will not end with the checking of data from the nine districts, and we would like to believe T.B.Burauskaitė's statement that, "only by having information about concrete perpetrators of the Holocaust will we be able to ascertain at least a reasonably reliable overall figure of how many people carried out the Holocaust in Lithuania", and that at this time, "despite A.Kasparavičius' fears, the Centre does not intend to put an end to the case of the Jew-shooting".

It would probably be somewhat more useful if the Centre was to cast aside its negative attitude regarding the work of the Israeli experts, and if the lists were checked with the combined efforts of historians from both countries - i.e., if a confrontational attitude was transformed into a fruitful discussion and a common search for a resolution. This could lead to mutual understanding and reconciliation. But it seems that there are influential people in Lithuania for whom it is in fact useful to have confrontation and mistrust: in that way it is easier to stop Holocaust research and to obstruct the search for truth.

Historian A.Kasparavičius' fears that the lists could be turned into an ideological show seem totally legitimate. There are quite a few public figures for whom the country's history is merely a means for political machination, a shameful lie about history that can be used to feed a poorly informed "patriotic electorate". One of them recently expressed this kind of attitude regarding history: "We must respond to historical issues with heads raised." Note that there is no encouragement to study the history of one's homeland, with all of its victories and defeats, calamities and joys, but simply to raise high one's head.

To hush up the names of individuals who served in the criminal battalions is akin to hiding them and contributing to the lies and distortion of history. Of course there is the danger that someone could use the facts for dishonourable aims. But civilised societies decided a long time ago what their attitude to exposing various historical names and facts would be. One can't hide from names and facts, they must be known.

One would think that there would be many sound-thinking

people in official Lithuanian structures who would understand that the most important goal in researching and examining the lists of the killers would not be to settle accounts or to incite conflict, but to create conditions to overcome the crisis, to reconcile, to lay the foundation for mutual understanding and respect between the two nations.

The shadow of a horrible crime should not fall onto an entire nation and distort its image in the consciousness of humanity. We cannot permit murderers and sadists - no matter how many they might be - to be hidden from the Lithuanian people, to lurk behind the back of this long-suffering nation.

These kinds of hide-and-seek games are an insult to the honour and dignity of the Lithuanian people. The lists are also needed so that the individuals named therein are not turned into national heroes.

Do the lists need to be widely publicised? That question should be resolved not by politicians but by public referendum, which would reveal what the society makes of this complex problem.

CHARLATANIC DIAGNOSIS

Having heaped snippets of references to anti-Semitism from various places in A.Kasparavičius' article into an absurd carousel, T.B.Burauskaitė states that anti-Semitism in Lithuania has been "charlatanically diagnosed". In other words, that the aim has been to deceive readers.

It seems that the annual neo-Nazi marches, and slogans like "Lithuania for Lithuanians" and "Jews - out!", as well as the lack of reaction by government officials to such manifestations are not anti-Semitism. That the desecration of Jewish cemeteries and acts of vandalism at the sites of the killing of Jews are not anti-Semitism. That graffiti with swastikas and strung up stars of David, Lithuanian swear words on the walls of Jewish organisation buildings are not anti-Semitism. That offensive masks, caricatures of Jews that emerged in the Middle Ages, Shrovetide rhymes to the effect of "children take a stick and kill the little Jew", a pig's head dressed in a hat and sideburns, tossed in front of the synagogue - are also all "charlatanically diagnosed", rather than actually existing anti-Semitism in Lithuania.

Isn't it about time to concede that the killing of 212,000 Jews in Lithuania was not just a bothersome chance occurrence, an unex-

pected turn of history? Ordinary people in bandit-like gangs, with weapons in their hands and sheafs of LAF proclamations in their pockets, yelling "Jews - out!" and "Lithuania for Lithuanians!", spontaneously killed and robbed Jews in every village and town. That was the start of the Holocaust.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE CONTENT, NOT THE NAME

One of the most sensitive issues in A.Kasparavičius' article is the fact that there is no Holocaust exhibition in the Museum of Genocide Victims, which was established in 1992.

T.B.Burauskaitė explains that, "the MGCV was founded in 1992 after stormy public meetings demanding that a museum reflecting the Soviet genocide, and honouring its victims, be set up in the KGB cellars and their former prison cells". According to the director, this also explains the name of the museum. But in order that its name not confuse potential visitors, "the Centre is open to changing the name of the MGCV to something like Museum of Occupations - but for that it needs to hear the opinion of the public".

The director of the Centre informs us that plans for a reform are underway: "One of the prison cells will include an exhibition dedicated to the victims of the 1941-1944 Nazi occupation, and to the Gestapo activities that took place in this building." In other words, there are no plans to set up a full Holocaust exhibition at the MGCV. The new exhibition will present the activities of the Gestapo, but not the history of the Holocaust - which is apparently an unwelcome theme at the museum.

According to T.B.Burauskaitė, "MGV guides distribute material on the Holocaust published by the Centre in various languages, and they are obliged to recommend that visitors who are interested in the Holocaust visit the nearby Holocaust exhibition, the Tolerance Centre, historical exhibitions, the Paneriai memorial museum". This is what visitors to the MGCV can find out about the genocide of the Jews.

The State Vilna Gaon Jewish Museum owns three buildings on different streets in Vilnius, and another in Paneriai. In order to visit all of the sites, a foreigner needs to have a good knowledge of Vilnius directions, and be in good physical shape. A small, single-storey wooden building

called the Green House, located at Pamėnkalnio g. 12, which contains the most important Holocaust exhibition, is not easy to find - it doesn't at all resemble a museum, and it sits at the back of a yard high on a hill, invisible from the street. An elderly tourist would find it difficult to see, and even harder to get to without assistance.

The MGCV is set up in the very centre of the capital, in one of its most prestigious buildings. Finding themselves in the centre of Vilnius, in front of a sign that reads "Museum of Genocide Victims", foreigners who have no idea of Lithuania's political-party situation, enter the building hoping to find a Holocaust exhibition as basic as the building itself. Their disappointment is totally comprehensible. And neither a change in the name of the museum, nor a Gestapo exhibition, nor explanations or apologies by the guides will change the negative opinion about the Museum of Genocide Victims that has been expressed more than once in the foreign press. And there was only A.Kasparavičius who dared to ruffle the unanimous silence of the Lithuanian media.

It is impossible to present an exhibition of the real genocide in Lithuania without a full Holocaust exhibition, and with enough exhibits to fill several museums. The fact that there is no appropriate Holocaust museum in Lithuania reveals the aim of certain sectors, which is to set up the tragedy of the Lithuanian nation against the killing of 95% of Lithuania's Jews, including with the participation of local Nazi collaborators.

A.Kasparavičius is not mistaken in claiming that, "the Holocaust was and remains Lithuania's tragedy [...]". Lithuania lost 7% of its population thanks to the policies of the Shoah. This loss greatly changed the country: it impoverished it culturally and intellectually. It narrowed the possibilities for its advancement." Later the historian writes: "It may be that the mental estrangement of present-day Lithuania from Western culture and civilisation was extended by the loss of those 200,000 Lithuanian Jews who lay down before their time in Jerusalem of the North. By the loss of those who could have, but did not, thanks to our fellow citizens, become present-day Lithuania's Perelsteins, Arbit Blats, Romain Garrys. They could have, but will no longer help us."

Milan CHERSONSKIJ

WE LIVE IN THE YEAR 5771

(Continued from p.6)

The feast ended with a lovely cake inscribed with the words "Rosh ha-Shana 5771", which was large enough to feed all the participants, and heartily. And with thanks to the owner of this wonderful health and recreation complex, Michail Rositzan, to his assistant Ana Bastunskienė, and naturally to JOINT, which donated this fantastic gift to the members of the Lithuanian Jewish Community welfare centre.

And now comes the moment to bid farewell. To the admiration of all the participants, a helicopter lands on the green lawn in front of the main complex building, and the pilot emerges and invites everyone to be photographed with the metal bird that has landed on the earth. We will long recall this happy celebration, and the photograph will remind us of the wonderful start to this year.

Shimen GOLDENZWEIG



With the helicopter.

To President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė

Your Excellency,

The Jewish Community of Lithuania is greatly concerned about the ideas expressed by Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs A.Ažubalis, that incite discord between Lithuanians and Jews.

Items appearing in the mass media have indicated that minister A.Ažubalis stated that, "everyone already knows" who needs this law (re Lithuanian citizenship) the most, and that he explained that it was the Jews born in Lithuania who are pushing it forward. The politician also let it be understood that this is how they hope to more easily retrieve their former property.

One of the functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and of the minister, is to represent the Lithuanian state abroad. Can a minister with such attitudes represent a state, and does the state deserve such a minister?

The minister misleads the Lithuanian public. Individuals who did not have Lithuanian citizenship by December 31, 2001, lost the means to retrieve their former property. Thus neither an existing nor a newly passed law would grant the means to

retrieve property, even in the event that Jews were allowed to become Lithuanian citizens.

Neither the existing Lithuanian citizenship law nor the proposal for a new law are favourable to Jews. First of all, Jewish former prisoners of concentration camps and ghettos are not included in the category of individuals with the right to a non fixed-term for preservation of Lithuanian citizenship (unlike deportees and political prisoners).

The law on citizenship in the Republic of Lithuania, and the proposal for a new law grants separate, special rights for ethnic Lithuanians. Apparently the words "of Lithuanian descent" have nothing in common with Jews - Lithuanian citizens. "An individual deemed to be a person of Lithuanian descent is one with parents or grandparents, or with one parent or grandparent, who are or were Lithuanian, and who calls him/herself Lithuanian." We believe that in the case of other European Union citizens - Germans for example - a statement like "a citizen of German descent is a German" would wreak havoc not only in the sphere of law-making, but in the life of the society

itself, and that the generator of such an idea would be punishable by law.

Meanwhile in our state, the Minister of Foreign Affairs gives himself the right to consider out loud what the Jews, "who took advantage of everything", consider useful for themselves. At the same time, the minister's party colleagues suggest that they and the Jewish Community of Lithuania create a Litvak heritage forum and a Litvak virtual museum, and invite all world Jews, emigrants from Lithuania, to unite.

Given such a political situation, the Jewish Community of Lithuania will be forced to forego acceptance of such proposals. In our opinion, the honourable minister A.Ažubalis should apologise for his statements, for they are unquestionably statements that incite discord among nations.

This letter has the unanimous approval of twenty-one board members who attended a meeting of the Board of the Jewish Community of Lithuania on October 14, 2010.

Respectfully,

Dr. Simonas Alperavičius

Chairman

of Jewish Community of Lithuania