



ATTITUDES

Three events in Germany and Israel have had a very animating effect on our media...

FIRST EVENT: At Germany's request, a former guard of German concentration camps, Ivan Demjanjuk, was deported from the USA to Germany. At the beginning of the 1970s, Israel had sentenced I. Demjanjuk to death for crimes against humanity, but later revoked the sentence on the grounds of insufficient evidence, and released him to the USA. Now German lawyers have dis-

covered new information confirming I. Demjanjuk's crimes, for which there is no statute of limitations, and are proceeding with a new trial.

Three years ago, Nazi criminal Algimantas Dailidė was found guilty of crimes against humanity by the Lithuanian courts... and was absolved from punishment. Germany is striving to establish the entire truth about the Nazi period in its history, and is deliberating, denouncing, and, whilst overcoming its national pain, transforming its effects. Lithuania is striving to whitewash the crimes of the Nazi collaborators, to change historical truth by means of a fabricated heroic legend, and thereby to satisfy the interests of certain parties.

SECOND EVENT: An article entitled "Hitler's European Holocaust Helpers", published on May 21 in the German "Der Spiegel" journal, claimed, among other things, that local volunteers aided the Nazis in carrying out the "final resolution of the Jewish question". Up to ten local inhabitants, without whom such a massive annihilation of the Jews would have been impossible, assisted each German policeman. The article also indicates the role of Eastern European countries in carrying out the "final resolution of the Jewish question", and their responsibility for their actions.

In the opinion of Dieter Pohl, an expert at the Institute of Contemporary History in Germany, more than 200,000 non-Germans and non-Austrians "organised and carried out the killings, and contributed to them", and often functioned in a more cold-blooded manner than the Hitlerite strikers. The local inhabitants frequently "resolved the Jewish question" with no input from the Nazis. The article offers the example of the ferocious violence against sixty-eight Jews at the "Lietūkis" garage in Kaunas.

Evidence of that event came from a colonel with the northern group of the German army. According to him, on July 27, 1941, while walking alongside the "Lietūkis" garage in Kaunas, he heard shouts of "bravo" and clapping, and saw mothers raising their children so that they could see what was happening. The officer went closer, and later wrote down what he saw.

"In the concrete-laid courtyard, a fair-haired man of about 25 years of age, average height, was leaning on a stake the thickness of an arm and the height of his chest. At his feet lay 15-20 people, dead or dying. Water out of a hose was washing blood into the sewer system."

And further: "Barely a few steps away from that man, stood about 20 people guarded by se-

veral civilians - they quietly and submissively waited for the terrible execution. At a brief hand signal, one of them, without saying a word, stepped forward, and (...) was killed with the stake, and each blow was accompanied with joyful shouts from the audience."

According to the officer, when they were all killed and laying on the ground, the killer climbed onto the mound of corpses and started playing the accordion. The audience sang the national

anthem, as if the bloody orgy was a national ceremony.

Historian A. Anušauskas, former assistant to the director general of the Genocide and Research Centre of Lithuania, now a member of the parliamentary Tėvynės Sąjunga fraction, and chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on Security and Defence, declared that the attitude of German journalists regarding the Holocaust was irresponsible. According to him, the German officer was a representative of military intelligence, and that the killings took place during his first day in Lithuania - he didn't know Lithuanian, and therefore certainly could not distinguish the anthem. A. Anušauskas even discovered evidence that it wasn't the "national anthem", but Russian "chastushkas".

In other words, if the audience at that moment had performed, say, the Jewish choral from Verdi's "Nabucco", then their rejoicing at the corpses of sixty-eight totally innocent people wouldn't seem quite so cannibalistic.

A. Anušauskas claims that the fair-haired man was born in Kybartai, and that he was a recruited Gestapo agent. According to him, the murderer soon became assistant to the head of Lithuanian affairs of the Nazi security unit, knew Lithuanian perfectly, but had German origins. Apparently, since the academic historian mentions it, his German blood mixture must amount to some sort of explanation. But he doesn't inform us what mixtures existed in the blood of those who clapped the efforts of the killer, and, joyfully accompanied him with their songs.

THIRD EVENT: The Lithuanian media was still crackling with what Orwell described as "the hour of hate" for the "Der Spiegel" journal, which had dared to surmise that part of the responsibility for the Holocaust lay with the Eastern European countries that had helped Germany to destroy the Jews, when a new outcry arose in Lithuania: the website of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel (chairman Yosif Melamed) published a list of individuals whom the Association accuses of the killing of Lithuanian Jews. The media announced that the list contains several hundred names. Correction: there are over thirty hundred, i.e., three thousand names.

Who can now claim that ALL Jews call ALL Lithuanians Jew-shooters? In a word, NOT ALL Jews, and NOT ALL Lithuanians. On what basis would ALL LITHUANIANS, whom certain information bodies seek to represent, identify themselves with the individuals named in the Association list? As we have been unable to

access the documents, we have no right to comment on and to count the killers, but we do know that there were enough of them to exterminate 200,000 Jews in Lithuania, and hundreds of thousands of Jews in Ukraine, Poland, and other countries. We also know that among the Lithuanians there are Righteous Among the Nations, and that alone is enough to forestall Jew-shooters in Lithuania from hiding behind the caption ALL LITHUANIANS.

The Association list is not new.

It was published over ten years ago in a journal called "Lithuania. Crime and Punishment. #6, 1999". It is impossible to believe that no-one in Lithuania knew of this publication. Why the silence for ten years, and now such whole-hearted anger on the part of certain press organs? Here are the headings: "Jews see Lithuanian heroes as butchers", "Lithuanians slandered", "Jews don't support defamation of Lithuanians". Never any concrete people, always the abstract "Jews" and "Lithuanians". The Association list is concrete, and its publishers are concrete.

Certain media personalities are irate that the list is accompanied by a curse: "May God punish those cowards. May their assistants, collaborators and families, their descendants and heirs be cursed throughout all eternity." Terrible, isn't it? But are the murderers - who rejected all humanity and shot unarmed old people, who forced women to undress before being shot, who raped them, who, in front of their mothers, bashed the heads of infants against the corners of buildings - worthy of more humanitarian acts? And what, messieurs, would you say, if (!), if (!) - God forbid that anyone, ever (!) - the bandits did to your families what they did with the family of the same Y. Melamed - a former Kovno Ghetto prisoner, who managed miraculously to avoid being killed?

Of 141 parliamentarians, only five (3.5 %) - Gintaras Songaila, Kazimieras Uoka, Saulius Stoma, Dalia Teišerskytė, and Julius Sabatauskas - openly declared their anger against the published lists, and demanded that the prosecutor general's office initiate a pre-trial investigation of the Association on a charge of slander, and that it defend the honour of four (out of 3,000, i.e., fewer than 0.13 %) Lithuanian partisans - Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas, Lioginas Baliukevičius-Dzūkas, Juozas Barzda-Bradauskas, Juozas Lukša-Daumantas.

Silence from Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus, who, on February 14, at a reception meeting dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the declaration of the council of the Lithuanian Freedom Fighters' Movement, said: "In the mid-20th century, Lithuania's partisans were more virtuous, honest, and worthy of respect than were the leaders of the great nations, who were dividing up the world into new spheres of influence."

Regardless of the 1999 publication, the names of partisans were hewn into the granite base of the building in Vilnius that once belonged to the Gestapo, then to the Soviet NKVD-KGB, and is now the home of the Museum of Lit-

huanian Genocide Victims. Lithuanian ethnographic museums hold exhibitions dedicated to these partisans, their names are engraved in memorial plaques and are given to schools, films have been made about them. Does this mean that there is strong evidence refuting the existence of their names on the Association list? Silence.

Prosecutor general Algimantas Valantinas confirmed that the prosecutor's office received the appeal of the five parliamenta-

the basis of the idea of a two-fold commission, would not help to establish the historical truth. "Unless these two tragedies are fully and completely separated, this project will not contribute toward a healing of the wounds and improve the relations between our peoples," - wrote Y. Melamed.

Vilnius did not listen to the warning of the Association. Quite the opposite - at the present time, Lithuanian Parliament members Emanuelis Zingeris

rians, but that thus far it has not decided whether to take on the task, because "sometimes just a brief declaration is not sufficient. (...) In order to proceed with a pre-trial investigation, the details must be checked out."

Rimvydas Valentukevičius, chief prosecutor of the special investigations branch of the prosecutor's office doubted whether trial proceedings could be undertaken if the individuals, or the families of those on the list, do not appeal to law enforcement bodies on charges of slander or abuse of the memory of the deceased. Besides, according to Valentukevičius, the Association website is not operating from Lithuania, and it is therefore difficult or even impossible to ascertain who published the names. Especially, as the prosecutor said, since Israel does not hand over its own.

It's not law enforcement bodies that should be recreating the uncompromised entire truth about the events of the Second World War, and publishing verified and substantiated lists of Nazi collaborators, participants in the "final resolution of the Jewish question", but highly qualified Lithuanian and Israeli academic scholars, working together, and outside of any political conjectures.

Unfortunately, in Lithuania it is often politicians with a very questionable, sometimes even conjectural concept of the historical process, who take it upon themselves to explain the historical truth. Let us remember, for example, that, in the 1990s, approximately 50,000 people, including former Jew-shooters, were hurriedly acquitted in Lithuania during the process of the special, politically-motivated rehabilitation of the victims of the Stalinist terror. Under pressure from abroad, Parliament was forced to repeal their rehabilitation. And what of it? A random mistake? A test of the vigilance of world opinion? And were all the illegal acts of rehabilitation actually repealed?

The long drawn-out trial proceedings of three suspects - A. Lileikis, K. Gimžauskas and A. Dailidė (out of many dozens) - have been entered into the history of Lithuania. None of them carried out their deserved sentences.

Lithuania has a Commission for the Evaluation of Crimes Committed by Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes. In 1998, Y. Melamed, a strong Zionist and an adversary of the communist order, tried to reach a mutual understanding with Lithuanian leaders. He approached president Valdas Adamkus, asking him not to set up a two-fold commission, and warned him that the erroneous symmetry of the Nazi and Soviet regimes, which formed

and Dainius Žalimas are putting quite a lot of effort into trying to equate, in the legal consciousness of Europe, the crimes committed by the Nazi and the Soviet regimes. These politicians are not interested in historical studies, they are acting not out of a desire to reveal the historical truth, but to force history to serve their party and political interests.

For several years, the Lithuanian prosecutor general's office tried to initiate court proceedings against a former Jewish partisan, Yitzhak Arad, who is now known in Israel and worldwide as a historian, and as one of the most important experts on the history of the Holocaust. He had once agreed to work on president V. Adamkus' founded commission.

The process regarding Y. Arad is not yet finished, but has been suspended on the basis of a formulation that allows it to recommence at any moment. The prosecutor's office has not apologised to Y. Arad for its unfounded suspicions. Remaining in a strange position - neither suspected, nor officially absolved of the role of witnesses to an alleged crime - are Fania Brancovskaja and Rachil Margolis, former members of an anti-Nazi partisan group. They fought on the side of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, and by their actions brought closer the total routing of Nazism. How long does the prosecutor's office intend to treat them as "witnesses" for that?

No matter what the aims of the prosecutor's office, the work of the two-fold commission - the study of Nazi crimes - has been ruined by the attempt of the prosecutor to sully the honour of all those partisans who fought against the Nazis and their local collaborators, to scare off the extant surviving partisans, and to equate Jewish partisans with those individuals who are named on the Association list.

One can invent the history of a society. But not for long when it comes to a historical perspective, for history, like nature, opposes coercion, and manages to cleanse itself of imposed filth. The truth about the killings of the Jews of Lithuania during the Second World War, and about their concrete perpetrators, will be revealed, and then one will have to shamefacedly throw out the history textbooks, as has already been done with textbooks from the Soviet period. But who today in Lithuania will help to hasten that cleansing, at least for the well-being of the children, and at least in order to defend the present-day young generation from lies, neo-Nazism, fascism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia?

Milan CHERSONSKIJ

WHO WILL DEFEND THE CHILDREN?