



On September 24, 2008, the Prosecutor General's Office of Lithuania announced that "due to insufficient evidence to prove initial suspicions," it had "dropped that portion of the accusations related to crimes during the Second World War committed by Yitzhak Arad, there is insufficient data with regard to Yitzhak Arad to bring the case to trial".

What "data" had the prosecutors collected? That Itzhak Arad, a 15 year-old ghetto prisoner, named Yitzhak Rudnicki at the time, escaped without being shot when the local Nazi collaborators had, in his sight, exterminated all of the Jews of his village? That he took up arms in a partisan unit against those who shot unarmed people? That he felt duty-bound to his family and the whole Jewish nation to fight against Nazis and Nazism?

In a civilised society it is customary to apologise for unfounded accusations. No-one apologised to Y.Arada. The prosecutors did not bring the case to trial, but they did leave the stain of their "initial suspicions".

Y.Arada left Lithuania for all time in 1945. He made his way to the Promised Land, took part in the struggle for Israel's independence, was head, as brigadier general, of the education division of the Israeli Defence Army, and then for over 20 years was president of the board of directors of Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Authority.

To restore the truth about the Holocaust, to demask Nazism and to struggle that it be exterminated worldwide - these have been his life's most important goals. Today he is a celebrated scholar, and an authoritative researcher on the Holocaust in Lithuania.

Arad was invited to consult for the Special Investigations' Branch of the USA Justice Department. He gave evidence in writing against chief of Nazi security police for the Vilnius district, Aleksandras Lileikis, and his subordinate Algimantas Dailidė, both of whom were deported to Lithuania. That is why he is hated by those who demand that Nazi criminals and their henchmen, who evaded justice after the war, not be prosecuted.

In 1992, Y.Arada came to independent Lithuania to award Righteous Among the Nations medals on behalf of Yad Vashem. An International Commission for the Evaluation of Crimes Committed by Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes was set up by the president of Lithuania in 1998. Y.Arada accepted an invitation to work with the Commission. He wanted to help Lithuania emerge from the impasse into which it is forced by its so-called "patriots".

In March 2006, a lawyer of Lithuanian descent by the name of Augustinas Idzelis flew to Vilnius from America, ostensibly to observe court proceedings in the case of Nazi collaborator A.Dailidė. It is quite likely that A.Idzelis brought to Lithuania the idea to instigate a case against Y.Arada, including by taking advantage of his book of memoirs entitled "Partisan. From the Valley of Death to Mount Zion" (USA, 1979).

In his book, among other things, Y.Arada describes the daily routine of the Soviet partisans. The partisan unit fought against the Nazis, "security police", and local "self-defence units", which the Nazis had rounded together and equipped with arms in order to hunt down partisans. The partisans used to engage in combat with these armed units, which were well-acquainted with the attitudes of their countrymen, whom they mercilessly robbed, terrorised, and kept in constant fear, including by demanding that they betray the partisans.

On April 24, 2006, the "Respublika" newspaper printed a two-page lampoon by Julius Girdvainis, entitled "Expert with bloody hands", in which the journalist of-

fers a biased interpretation, based on a conversation with A.Idzelis, of certain episodes of Y.Arada's book of memoirs. And in May 2006, the pre-trial investigation branch of the Lithuanian Security Department received a letter from head of the Centre of Genocide and Resistance, Dalia Kuodytė, now a member of Parliament, on the basis of which

BITTER PILL OF HISTORY

the "Y.Arada case" got underway.

In June 2007 the Lithuanian Prosecutor General's Office asked that the Israeli Ministry of Justice present Yitzhak Arad with a writ declaring that he was suspected of having committed criminal acts while serving under the Soviet NKVD in occupied Lithuania during the Second World War and post-war period, that could be construed, in terms of the inhabitants of Lithuania, as crimes against humanity.

The Prosecutor General's Office claimed that "a pre-trial investigation had gathered enough facts to prove that a crime had been committed". Of the several thousand Soviet partisans who fought against the Nazis and their local collaborators on Lithuanian territory, the prosecutors had chosen Y.Arada as their suspect.

Josif Melamed, president of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel, said the following about the aims of the prosecutors: "Thus far they had not found a single Jew who killed unarmed Lithuanians. There were no Jews like that. But in all of the archives you will find the names of those 23,000 Lithuanians who killed Jews."

Y.Arada himself thinks that, "they (the prosecutors - M.Ch.) are trying, via this investigation, to create an illusion of equality. It would then be as if, yes, the Lithuanians had killed Jews, but the Jews had killed Lithuanians as well. So now we're even, and can carry on as usual."

It didn't end there. Attempts were made to slander the reputation of other former Jewish partisans - Fania Brancovskaja and Rachile Margolis - as well. True, not as suspects (the one Y.Arada was sufficient!), but as witnesses. Either on someone else's behalf or at her own initiative, prosecutor Rita Vaitiekūnienė announced over the television to all of Lithuania that the institutions of law and order were looking for former partisan Fania Brancovskaja, but that thus far they hadn't pinned down her address. Apparently the Prosecutor General's Office is incapable of finding the address of former Vilna Ghetto prisoner and partisan Fania Brancovskaja, who is now 86 years old, has lived all her life in her home town of Vilnius, and hasn't changed residence for several decades.

The media announced that the institutions of law and order are also looking for R.Margolis - even though it is known that she lives in Israel. The public declarations of "a search" for these suspects gave the impression that the latter are hiding from the law. Later the Prosecutor General's Office announced that "hundreds of witnesses were being questioned" - though there were in fact only 83 of them. And only two - F.Brancovskaja and R.Margolis - were named publicly. As was Y.Arada. A casual "coincidence", naturally.

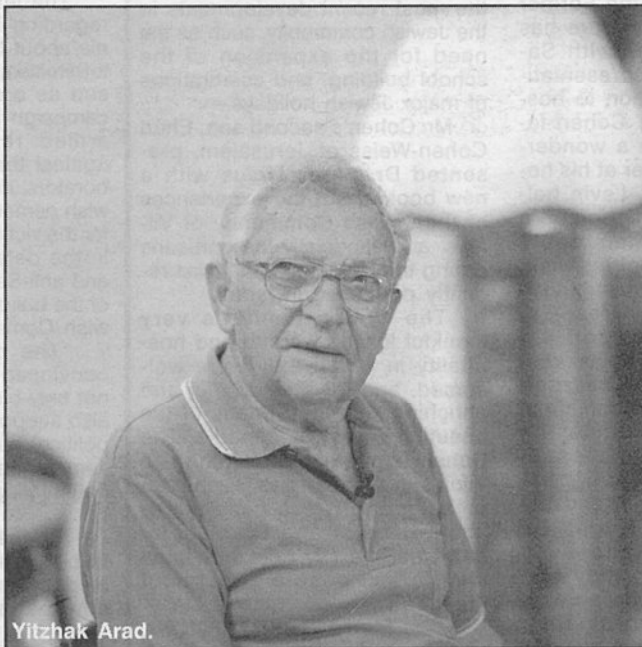
The investigation of Soviet partisans "coincidentally" started with the Jews. Exactly as in Stalin's time, when the "working people"

demand a search for "poisoning doctors", "JOINT spies", "agents of imperialism", etc. It appears that Stalinists and anti-Stalinists are cast from the same mold.

In this case the "working person" is visible: the search for F.Brancovskaja and R.Margolis was undertaken at the initiative of Rytas Kupčinskas, member of the

tisan, in the largest newspapers in Israel, USA, Great Britain, Canada, Germany, and elsewhere, as well as over the BBC and other foreign television and radio programmes. There were voices in the foreign media urging that Vilnius be deprived of the right to the title of European cultural capital in 2009.

media orgy against president A.Brazauskas, when he apologised to the Knesset members in 1995 "for those Lithuanians who mercilessly killed, shot, deported, and robbed the Jews"? Wasn't it the illness that motivated the attempts to justify the crimes of Lileikis, Gimzauskas, Dailidė, and all those like them, to justify the tens



Yitzhak Arad.

Homeland Union and Christian Democrat political faction.

R.Kupčinskas' party friend and Parliamentary colleague Emanuelis Zingeris, who is also the chairman of the International Commission for the Evaluation of Crimes Committed by Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes, did not officially state his opinion regarding the attempt to compromise Commission member Y.Arada - as if there was nothing connecting him with the "Y.Arada case". It seems as if "party interests" are more important to him than the truth, his own honour, the Commission's authority, and the international reputation of Lithuania.

What was the result of the campaign to persecute anti-fascist partisan, general, and scholar Yitzhak Arad?

Avner Shalev, director of the Yad Vashem memorial research centre, declared that, "any attempt to equate partisan activities with illegal and criminal acts dangerously distorts the events that took place in Lithuania during the war years".

In his protest against the actions of the Lithuanian Prosecutor General's Office, Y.Arada quit the International Commission under E.Zingeris.

In solidarity with Y.Arada, Sir Martin Gilbert, one of the most authoritative historians of the Second World War, stopped his work with the Commission: he angrily referred to the designs of the Lithuanian authorities degenerate. In protest against the persecution of Y.Arada, former partisan Dov Levin, now a celebrated scholar, historian, and professor at the University of Jerusalem, returned the letter of thanks that had once been given to him by a Lithuanian president.

The refusal by M.Gilbert, Y.Arada, and D.Levin to work with the Commission undermines the international trust in its activities. If that was the aim of those who came up with the idea to disgracefully manipulate the name of Y.Arada, then they can celebrate, for they achieved their goal: it has now become easier to falsify the history of Nazi occupied Lithuania. But who will believe such a Commission?

The attempt to bring a case against Y.Arada has damaged Lithuania's reputation in the civilised world. Authoritative public figures denounced the unprecedented persecution of an anti-fascist par-

Poles, Jews, Russians, etc.) during the Soviet period.

The Soviet authorities in Lithuania, like in the other so-called Union republics, did not carry out a genocide, but a policy of terror against the population for political and social reasons. In the eyes of the NKVD-NKGB-MGB-KGB, national, racial, or religious factors carried no determining weight.

The genocide of the Jews of Lithuania in 1941-1944 was the tragedy of both Jewish and Lithuanian people, and it affected and continues to affect not only the relations of the Lithuanians and the Jews, but relations among the Lithuanians themselves. It's time to admit that.

Unfortunately, alongside those who understand the effect of the Jewish tragedy in 1941-1944 on the ongoing history of the Lithuanian nation, there are forces energetically at work that are hauling the country into the past, that want to create a diligently cleaned-up heroic myth, based on lies about the scale of the genocide of the Jews, in lieu of the real history of the country, and that endeavour to justify an unprecedented crime against humanity using deceitful claims about the guilt of the Jews towards the Lithuanian people. And unfortunately there are those who support such a position.

Ultimately, what is important is not only who came up with the horrifying idea to capture the 15 year-old teenager named Itzhak Rudnicki, who managed, 65 years ago, to flee from the Nazi collaborators, and to shove him, today under the name of Yitzhak Arad, back into that same hole into which the local Nazi henchmen had already dumped more than 200,000 of his innocent fellow countrymen. What is also important is the fact that the people who are trying to do this, have today been designated to act in the name of an independent country, of NATO, of the EU.

It would seem that a repeated flare-up of this society's illness - the aim to rewrite the history of Lithuania during the Second World War - has expressed itself in the form of a dishonourable campaign against Y.Arada. Isn't it the same illness that lies behind the attempt to rehabilitate the killers who returned from Soviet prisons and exile by comparing them to people whom the Soviet authorities repressed unjustly? Was it not an attack of this illness that initiated the

Unfortunately, neither the Lithuanian press, nor the television or radio denounced this campaign. Why? Were they afraid? And of what?

There are forces in Lithuania that seek to rewrite the results of the Second World War. Having created the "double genocide" pseudo-theory, some of Lithuania's historians and publicists try to equate the universal destruction of the Jewish people during the time of Nazi occupied Lithuania, with the mass repressions for political and social reasons against all ethnic groups in Lithuania (Lithuanians,

of thousands of Nazi subordinates who served with the "security police" and "self-defence units", whose hands violently killed Jews in Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, and elsewhere? Was it not the illness that caused a group of Parliamentarians to try to wash away the pro-Nazi reputation of the 1941 provisional government of Lithuania? And so on, and so on, and so on. The symptoms of this serious and chronic disease go on forever.

An anti-Semitic skinhead demonstration marched through the centre of Vilnius on March 11 of last year. In August vandals attacked the buildings of the Vilnius, Panevėžys, Klaipėda, and Kaunas Jewish Community Centres. They weren't "isolated hooligan acts", as certain high officials insist, they were organised and co-ordinated events. It no longer looks as if website commentaries brimming with anti-Semitic ravings are the work of isolated internet surfers either.

And the public silence and fear - as happened back then, when the country was paralysed with horror, when the gangs of local Nazi henchmen ravaged Lithuania's towns and villages, looking for Jews. Today the neo-Nazis are becoming increasingly more active. They manifest not only against the Jews, whom they want to transform into Lithuania's marginalised community, but against the entire Lithuanian nation, against its history and its future.

The continuation of such events indicates the kind of flare-up of this illness that turned into an epidemic in Germany and Austria in 1939-1940. In order for that not to happen, the illness needs to be exposed - those suffering from racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia, need to be treated. The sole reliable medicine for this illness is HISTORICAL JUSTICE. Unfortunately, it's a bitter pill to swallow.

The Second World War became Lithuania's greatest humanitarian and demographic tragedy: the large and active Jewish community was destroyed right before its eyes, and it's no secret how that happened.

The perpetrators of the tragedy poisoned the conscience of several generations, and they continue to poison it with lies about the fault for this tragedy lying with the Jews themselves.

The politicians and historians who pander to them, who try to justify their crimes, came up with a "double genocide" theory, and are now attempting to convince the European public that the Lithuanian people experienced genocide in exactly the same way as the Jews of Lithuania did.

Lies about the history of a people are sooner or later confronted by justice - they fall apart, and bring the nation new catastrophes. Two empires based on lies about heroic myths have collapsed before our eyes because historical justice, no matter how strong the attempt to hide it, always comes to the foreground.

The recognition of the truth about oneself and history, no matter how bitter it may be, is the sole means of saving oneself from dishonest myths, hypocrisy, the humiliating need to lie to oneself, one's children, one's grandchildren. Only historical justice, no matter how bitter, brings a person round again, and allows him to live and breathe freely.

Milan CHERSONSKIJ