



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE GENOCIDE AND RESISTANCE OF RESIDENTS OF LITHUANIA

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February 11, 2020

Nr. 14R-

in re: January 16, 2020

To: Grant Arthur Gochin,
represented by attorney Rokas Rudzinskas
A. Mickevičiaus street no. 14-2
LT-08119 Vilnius

ON THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION

In response to your letter, we inform you that your demand the Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania (hereinafter Center) annul the finding "On the Activity of Jonas Noreika (General Storm) in the Anti-Nazi Underground" cannot be done for the following reasons.

Your statements that, allegedly, "the statements of the historical finding are based exclusively on the testimony of father Jonas Borevičius and the Center's assumptions," "during the research there was a failure to take into account the facts and circumstances surrounding the giving of these testimonies," "the witness possibly failed to remember episodes which were not beneficial to a person who was facing deportation from the USA" and "this is an ideological rather than an historical finding" are false.

1. The Center in its finding of December 17, 2019, clearly indicated that "the testimony of father Jonas Borevičius given under oath in a US court confirmed the explanations given by the Center on March 27, 2019, about the accusations against Jonas Noreika/General Storm." Therefore this finding is a continuing document by the Center, flowing from earlier Center findings (2015, 2017 and March 27, 2019) on the activity of Jonas Noreika, and this is indicated in the Center's texts cited: the March 27, 2019, text cites the 2017 finding, and the December 17, 2019, finding cites the findings of March 27, 2019. By citing earlier texts which examine Jonas Noreika's activity in its newest texts, the Center isn't repeating the same sources and arguments. They are the result of integral and comprehensive research and constitute a whole. One and the same person, the Center's

general director, assessed and signed onto the Center's texts connected with research on the activity of Jonas Noreika.

2. The December 17, 2019, finding on Noreika's activity was intended to inform the public of the very important testimony by father Jonas Borevičius which had been discovered, a testimony which confirms and adds to the conclusions published in the Center's text of March 27, 2019: "as head of the Šiauliai district, Jonas Noreika was an active member of the underground Lithuanian anti-Nazi organization the Lithuanian Front; the Šiauliai anti-Nazi resistance underground, to which Noreika belonged, actively rescued Jews. The Šiauliai residents who rescued Jews trusted Noreika, and esteemed him very highly."

3. The Center sees no reason to doubt the truth of father Jonas Borevičius's testimony for the following reasons:

a) The Center does not have any confirmed facts (and you haven't provided any either) of Lithuanians living in Great Britain providing false testimony in extradition cases against Lithuanians in the USA.

b) The Center has no information father Borevičius was charged with giving false testimony. On the contrary, father Borevičius's life, his work and his self-sacrifice in rescuing Jews allow us to consider him a just man.

c) Father Jonas Borevičius's testimony on Jonas Noreika was not connected in any way with Virkutis's activity and could not have exonerated Virkutis as the accused. This testimony only came about when parties in the court proceedings were given background questions intended to determine whether father Borevičius was a member of the anti-Nazi underground. In this regard, father Borevičius would have had no interest at all in saying things which were untrue.

d) Father Jonas Borevičius's testimony on the rescue of Jews he carried out conforms to known facts. All the members of the Jewish rescue group mentioned have been recognized for rescuing Jews: father Adolfas Kleiba was recognized as a Righteous Gentile and fathers Petras Dziegoraitis and Jonas Borevičius were awarded awards by the Lithuanian president for rescuing Jews. That father Jonas Borevičius rescued Jews is even cited in a book published by the Soviets called "Ir be ginklo kariai" [And Soldiers without Arms] and father Jonas Borevičius presented this book during trial as proof of his participation in rescuing the Jews of Šiauliai. The clandestine methods about which father Jonas Borevičius testified conform to the clandestine methods employed by the Lietuvių frontas [Lithuanian Front] anti-Nazi organization, and Jonas Noreika was the leader of this organization in the Šiauliai district.

e) Father Jonas Borevičius's testimony on the behavior of the administration of the Šiauliai prison (the head of the prison was the accused A. Virkutis) towards prisoners agrees with the statements prison chaplain Vladas Požėla gave to KGB interrogators. Father Vladas Požėla's

statements clearly show A. Virkutis did not restrict Požėla from actively helping prisoners, bringing them additional food products, passing on letters to loved ones and even providing them better cells (the KGB interrogators were surprised: "Did you organize openly aid to prisoners and no one took any measures against you for this?"). The Center has no reason not to trust these statements from father Vladas Požėla, since he is recognized as a Righteous Gentile and Jews and Soviet activists who were prisoners at the Šiauliai prison have confirmed his rescue activities.

f) In material collected on father Borevičius by the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum, it is stated: "Together with other Jesuit priests from Šiauliai, Jonas Borevičius got involved in rescuing Jews: he provided documents to those in hiding, found hiding places for them and reliable people who consented to provide shelter to persecuted Jews and to save Jewish children. Father Jonas Borevičius maintained contact with other notable residents of Šiauliai: Domas and Sofija Jasaitis..." (<http://www.jmuseum.lt/lt/zuvanciuju-gelbejimo-kryziaus-iteikimo-ceremonijos/i/268/apdovanojimo-ceremonijos-bukletas-gyvenima-dovanojusios-sirdys/>). Material possessed by the Center shows Domas Jasaitis maintained close contact with Jonas Noreika as well as father Jonas Borevičius.

All of this information provides no basis for discrediting the testimony of father Jonas Borevičius that he was encouraged to the activity of rescuing Jews by Šiauliai district chief and anti-Nazi underground commander Jonas Noreika.

Because you based your statements on the opinion of Lithuanian History Institute director Alvydas Nikžentaitis, it needs to be pointed out the 20th century is not his field of historical research.

Your statement that the text quoted was shortened and made use of square brackets (this method is frequently used in history works) and that this is somehow "an illegitimate distortion of Domas Jasaitis's testimony and the text of the encyclopedia, assigning the status of underground commander to Jonas Noreika and is disinformation" is false. The unshortened text of the Lietuvių enciklopedija [Lithuanian Encyclopedia] published in Boston is this [translated from Lithuanian--trans.]: "Jonas Noreika was appointed head of the Šiauliai district by the Lithuanian Provisional Government in 1941. Serving in this post he made contact with the underground and staunchly defended the affairs of the country against the occupier. Following a propaganda tour to Germany in 1943, he published in the Lithuanian press the article 'Šių dienų Vokietija' [Today's Germany] which was rather unfavorable towards the Nazi regime."

Your statement that allegedly "in your [the Center's] earlier historical finding on the activity of Jonas Noreika, the testimony of A. Pakalniškis was rejected as unacademic based on the fact that A. Pakalniškis in an earlier edition of his book did not directly name Jonas Noreika calling him commander" is not true. The Center in its 2017 finding wrote the facts of the circumstances discredited the claims presented in Pakalniškis's memoirs: the testimonies of other participants in the

events, historical documents and historical research on the Nazi occupational system [discredit him].

Your claim the "Center's finding shows 'before the liquidation of the Žagarė ghetto Jonas Noreika didn't understand ghettos were one of the stages of the Holocaust,' and this conclusion is made based on unacademic, cherry-picked sources, SS brigadenführer W. Stahlecker's explanations given Himmler on the pogroms of 1941 in Lithuania and on J. Urbaitis's statement in his defense given NKVD interrogators in a 1944 criminal case" is not true. In the Center's findings of March 27, 2019, and December 17, 2019, this conclusion was also supported by member of the Lithuanian Jewish Community and Vilnius ghetto researcher Ilja Lempert's conclusions, the filmed memoirs of Hans Gewecke who was the commissar of the Šiauliai military district and one of the initiators of the Žagarė and Šiauliai ghettos, the footage being preserved by the Washington, D. C., Holocaust Memorial Museum, and also by the facts that a court in Lübeck ([West] Germany) threw out in 1969 accusations made against Gewecke and his deputy Evaldas Bubas they were complicit in the Holocaust; Bubas (whom Domas Jasaitis in his memoirs characterized as "refinedly brutal, responsible for the arrest in March of 1943 and deportation to Stutthof of the great patriot and resistance member Jonas Noreika) was wholly exonerated, while Gewecke was convicted and sentenced to four and a half years' imprisonment for his directive which led to the hanging of B. Mazoveckis in the Šiauliai ghetto. The regional court of Oldenburg also exonerated Šiauliai [Schaulen] concentration camp (the Šiauliai ghetto was converted to a concentration camp in 1943) commander Hermann Schleef on April 27, 1970.

The Center does not agree with your opinion that this conclusion by the Center is "Holocaust denial" and the Center has never denied the Holocaust. The Center hasn't heard that you might made similar accusations against Germany, although, as noted, German courts exonerated the actual builders and commanders of the Šiauliai ghetto and the Šiauliai concentration camp.

Teresė Birutė Burauskaitė, general director

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