**Budgetary enterprise Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania**
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# COMPLAINT
## FOR THE ANNULMENT OF THE HISTORICAL FINDING
January 16, 2020

In December of 2019 the Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania (hereinafter Center) prepared an historical finding called "On the Activities of Jonas Noreika (General Storm) in the Anti-Nazi Resistance" and sent it for publication to the Baltic News Service. The title headings in the finding claim:

1. Jonas Noreika actively contributed to the rescue of Jews from Šiauliai.
2. Noreika should be considered a member of the anti-Nazi resistance from the very beginning of his tenure as head of the district of Šiauliai.
3. Until the liquidation of the Žagarė ghetto, Noreika didn't understand ghettos were one of the stages of the Holocaust.

The finding states the testimony of Father Jonas Borevičius, hitherto unknown to historiography, is important to both Noreika's history and the entire history of the Lithuanian anti-Nazi resistance. This testimony allegedly fundamentally negates Soviet disinformation, which is often being repeated today, aimed at compromising members of the anti-Soviet resistance and the insurgents of the June 1941 Uprising, the Center claims.

I DO NOT AGREE WITH THE HISTORICAL FUNDING. IT IS UNACADEMIC, OFFENSIVE AND DISINFORMS THE PUBLIC, AND THEREFORE I DEMAND IT BE ANNULLED.

The claims made in the historical finding are based solely on the testimony of Fr. Jonas Borevičius and speculations and assumptions by the Center. The finding bases itself on the authority of D. Jasaitis, a rescuer of Jews, and it talks about his activities, but it provides no document testimony naming Jonas Noreika as having rescued Jews. The finding exploits grammar and punctuation,

inserting alleged ellipses in square brackets, and quotes where the Center inserts its additions into quoted material, i.e., the Center adds its own material into the historical sources being quoted.

The content and facts surrounding the publication of the finding prepared by the Center demonstrate the finding is intended to promote and defend Jonas Noreika publicly against accusations I have made against Holocaust perpetrators. Wholly ignoring the documents which I have provided, and failing to publish them, the Center just before Christmas prepared and propagated this controversial finding which claims Jonas Noreika didn't understand what ghettos were for, that he rescued Jews and that he was in charge of the anti-Nazi resistance.

This finding was prepared uncritically and includes unconnected quotations and claims of all sort. This historical finding grossly violates the Lithuanian law on the provision of information to the public. This is public disinformation and Holocaust denial performed at the institutional level.

## Lack of Academic Methodology

The foundation of the finding is Father Jonas Borevičius's testimony in a U.S. court given in 1986. i.e., more than 40 years after the events in question. This document was analyzed by and this finding was prepared by Center employee D. Stančikas, who holds a degree in geology, but not in history.

**During this research the facts and context in which this testimony was given were not taken into account. This is extremely significant.** In the opinion of director of the Lithuanian History Institute Alvydas Nikžentaitis, in the 1970s and 1980s following the renewal of extradition cases against Lithuanians in the U.S.A. and Great Britain, compatriots of the accused sought to give only beneficial testimony for the accused. Borevičius was no exception. It was observed the witness in his testimony seems to have forgotten episodes which wouldn't have benefited the accused who was threatened with deportation from the U.S. [1] The director of the Lithuanian History Institute called Borevičius's testimony an unreliable source, especially in light of the fact his testimony is not confirmed by any other sources.

Vilnius University professor Nerijus Šepetys said the best thing you could say about the testimony was that it was a testimony about what happened long after the fact, but that you couldn't say simply and directly Noreika had rescued Jews. Now suddenly here is a finding written in such a tone, and squeezing the sources to fit historiography claims, radically interpreting these claims and then coming up with such conclusions about what he understood and didn't understand, the professor said. Claims and conclusions Noreika should be considered a member of the anti-Nazi resistance, that he actively contributed to saving Jews, basing this on nothing at all.[2] These sorts of conclusions are arrived at not based on fact, but by attempting to make preconceived beliefs true, Šepetys said.[3]

The investigator in this case was required to attempt to determine the possible date a conversation took place and to compare that date with the date when Borevičius began helping Jews, and to investigate other historical facts and circumstances which might have had an influence on the priest's decision.

[1] https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/nuomones/3/1127865/alvydas-nikzentaitis-genocido-centro-isvada-del-jono-noreikos-niekine
[2] https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/istorikai-jei-lggrtc-pazyma-apie-j-noreika-butu-studento-darbas-ji-butu-ivertinta-labai-prastu-pazymiu-56-1249198?
[3] https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/nuomones/3/1127865/alvydas-nikzentaitis-genocido-centro-isvada-del-jono-noreikos-niekine

The Center's historical finding cites the so-called Antanas Gurevičius list which allegedly lists the names of those who rescued Jews. VU professor Nerijus Šepetys believes this is not a reliable historical source. Antanas Gurevičius was a municipal official. The list is composed of separate secondary sources, i.e., it is a document made up of non-academic texts and books, from random locations.[4]

There are no further facts about Noreika's connection with the rescue of Jews in the historical finding. And from the available material (Borisevičius's testimony) the only thing which can be concluded is that Noreika didn't like the Germans behaved towards the Jews, but the material doesn't show Noreika's passive or active participation in this process.[5]

Summarizing the public statements made by VU professor Nerijus Šepetys and Lithuanian History Institute director Alvydas Nikžentaitis, this historical finding should be considered null and void because of its failure to adhere to the methodology of academic research, its uncritical examination of a single source, the lack of other testimonies and its failure to look at documented facts and circumstances.

This is an ideological, not an historical finding, and the Center in presenting this sort of information as reliable is exploiting its official status and is performing criminal acts.

## Distortion of D. Jasaitis's Testimony

The finding actively uses as cover the authority of Jasaitis, who did participate in saving Jews. It says Sofija Jasaitienė rescued Jews and hid them at an orphanage in Viaguva, Lithuania. This institution was financed by the board of directors of the district of Šiauliai, whose head was Jonas Noreika. There is no information showing Jasaitienė checked with Noreika regarding these activities, nor that she was acting under his orders or direction. Thus: "Let's agree that the mere fact the district funded the orphanage doesn't mean that Noreika himself took part in this noble operation, or [at least agree] that there is a clear lack of evidence demonstrating the veracity of this fact." [6]

The historical finding makes another connection between Noreika and Jasiaitis. It claims:

"One of twelve founders of the anti-Nazi resistance's Lithuanian Front, the head of the Šiauliai city anti-Nazi underground D. Jasaitis, testifies: 'In the post [of head of the Šiauliai district], [Noreika] joined the underground and staunchly defended the country's interests' (Lithuanian Encyclopedia, vol. XX, Boston, p. 409)."

The historical finding in its explanation of Jasaitis's testimony exploits orthographic measures and in quoting the encyclopedia, it inserts Jonas Noreika in square brackets into Jasaitis's testimony. This is an illegitimate distortion of Jasaitis's testimony and the text of the encyclopedia. This assignment of head of the resistance to Noreika is disinformation, misinforming and misleading the public.

It should be kept in mind that in an earlier finding of history by the Center on the activities of Jonas Noreika, they rejected the testimony of A. Pakalniškis, who testified Noreika ordered the shooting of

[4] https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/istorikai-jei-lggrtc-pazyma-apie-j-noreika-butu-studento-darbas-ji-butu-ivertinta-labai-prastu-pazymiu-56-1249198?

[5] https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/nuomones/3/1127865/alvydas-nikzentaitis-genocido-centro-isvada-del-jono-noreikos-niekine

[6] ttps://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/nuomones/3/1127865/alvydas-nikzentaitis-genocido-centro-isvada-del-jono-noreikos-niekine

the Jews in the Plungė ghetto (the synagogue there) as unacademic, based on the fact Pakalniškis in an earlier edition of the same book didn't name Jonas Noreika specifically, calling him instead "the commander." This sort of methodological inconsistency demonstrates the Center is not carrying out its functions defined by law but continues to prepare findings based on cherry-picked evidence which agrees with the version of history the Center has created.

## (Mis-)Understanding the Purpose of the Ghettos

The finding says "until the liquidation of the Žagarė ghetto, Jonas Noreika didn't understand that ghettos were one of the stages in the Holocaust." This conclusion is reached based on explanations SS Brigadenführer W. Stahlecker gave to Himmler on the pogroms in Lithuania in 1941 and on J. Urbaitis's defense statement given to NKVD interrogators in a criminal case against him in 1944.

These are unreliable sources for deciding upon Jonas Noreika's understanding of the Holocaust and the purpose of the ghettos. One document is an irrational internal communiqué between Nazi officials testifying that the Jewish council in Kaunas was told "the establishment of a ghetto is the only measure for creating normal living conditions." The second document is testimony from the fired former head of the Šiauliai district against Noreika in a criminal case, a statement of defense given to the power organs of the occupier [i.e., under duress-trans.].

These documents are not connected with Noreika and do not talk about him. Relying upon these specially selected sources, to decide and make public conclusions at the institutional level on what Jonas Noreika did or did not understand is unacademic. It is not the function of the Center under law to prepare findings on the inner state of an individual. This is not academic historical research, it is a psychological conclusion.

**It should also be noted Urbaitis's testimony was also used in their earlier finding on Noreika, coming to the conclusion the Lithuanian people though the ghettos were a safe haven. This lie is being repeated to the public. This is Holocaust denial.**

The finding ignored the testimony of Žagarė mayor Simonas Rakštys.[7] Noreika reappointed the former mayor of Žagarė from before the Soviet occupation to the post at the end of August, 1941. The Nazi administration removed him from the post at the end of October, so he worked for two months, until the liquidation of the ghetto. During two different interrogation sessions Simonas Rakštys gave testimony that **in the period when the Žagarė ghetto was in operations, he as mayor of Žagarė without exception followed the orders of Jonas Noreika**.

The finding ignores the fact Jonas Noreika in September of 1941 issued two orders for the confiscation of Jewish tangible property and real estate. These were not orders given to him by the Nazis. Jonas Noreika collected the Jews in the Žagarė ghetto in August and then issued orders for the complete confiscation of their property, and began parceling out Jewish real estate. The Center's claim Jonas Noreika didn't understand the owners of those properties had been condemned to death is highly offensive. He, the highest official in the district to whom the police reported, drove these people out and took their homes and property, but according to the words from the Center, he didn't see their deaths and thought it would be safer for the Jews to live there [in the ghetto]. This is Holocaust denial.

[7] LYA K58-1, b.8276, l.11

## The (Non-)Rescue of Jews

The finding says that Jonas Noreika as head of the Šiauliai district was actively engaged in the anti-Nazi, Jew-rescuing underground from his very first days in the post. This is completely unfounded conclusion ignoring a plethora of facts which show Jonas Noreika was very much involved in the persecution and isolation of Jews, not their rescue.

The finding also fails to consider Noreika was the commander of the Telšiai Lithuanian Activists Front in the summer of 1941, that in July of that year he convoked and headed the Žemaičių žemė delegation which travelled to Kaunas to greet the LAF government there, a delegation **comprised of people accused of the mass murder of the Jews throughout Žemaitija**:

> "1. Telšiai district police chief **Bronius Juodikis**
> (Jonas Noreika's deputy, accused of being one of the leaders of the mass murder of the Jews of Telšiai)
> 2. Telšiai district head Ramanauskas
> 3. Telšiai district TDA director (commandant) major Svilas
> 4. Plungė LAF commander TDA commandant **lieutenant Alimas**
> **(accused of being one of the leaders of the mass murder of the Jews of Plungė)**
> 5. Telšių district hospital director Dr. Plechavičius
> 6. director of the Telšiai branch of the Bank of Lithuania Jurkus." [8]

The historical finding ignores the facts Jonas Noreika was the representative in Žemaitija [the western half of Lithuania] of the Lithuanian Activists Front, which was the political party in power until August 5, 1941, and that the LAF in Telšiai began publishing their own official newspaper called Žemaičių žemė in early July of 1941 and continued publishing it until 1942, a newspaper which published openly anti-Semitic propaganda even before August of 1941, and whose July issues featured Lithuanian translations of passages from Adolf Hitler's book Mein Kampf.

The historical finding ignores the facts that Noreika lived in Plungė and Telšiai exactly at the times when the mass murders of Jews were carried out at those two locations and that Noreika was at that time the head of the LAF government in Žemaitija. All documented facts demonstrating Noreika's connections with the mass murders carried out by the LAF and TDA are ignored, and the historical finding claims instead that immediately after the events in Plungė and Telšiai, Noreika began actively rescuing Jews. This is disinformation aimed at the public based on criminal beliefs.

## On His Leadership of an Anti-Nazi Underground

The finding claims that "the Nazis arrested Noreika on February 23, 1943, and imprisoned him at Stutthof concentration camp. German Security Police and SD commander Karl Jäger is responsible for the mass extermination of the Jews in Lithuania. Jonas Noreika was accused of "leading the Lithuanian resistance movement and rallied especially against the mobilization of the Lithuanian nation announced by the Reichskommissar. (Prisoner cards of Stutthof concentration camp inmates, Archiwum Muzeum Stutthof, Sygn., I-III-11224).

[8] Karo laikų dienoraštis [Wartime Diary]. Zenonas Blynas, Vilnius, 2010. p. 93; Žemaičių žemė No. 5

Lithuanian History Institute director Alvydo Nikžentaitis states: "The reasons for his removal from the post of district head were at the time indicated to be completely different. There is nothing there about anti-Nazi activities, the only crime he committed was to write a text critical of Germany which wasn't even published yet, the Gestapo found out about it before it was." [9] Vilnius University professor Nerijus Šepetys says Jonas Noreika ended up in the concentration camp along with other Lithuanians (including Balys Sruoga) as a demonstrative measure, the Nazis' punishment for disobedience in forming SS legions. Aside from Jonas Boresevičius's testimony, there is no other evidence Jonas Noreika took part in any anti-Nazi underground. [10]

Considering the arguments of these academics, the conclusion about Jonas Noreika's leading an anti-Nazi underground resistance is unfounded. His nomination as head of the resistance is based solely on a record of a prisoner card dictated by the Nazis and the testimony of a man favorable to his countrymen given 40 years after the events in question.

## The Illegality of the Historical Finding

The main task for the Center's activities (article 4 of the corresponding law founding the Center) is research on the physical and spiritual [sic] genocide of Lithuanian residents between 1939 and 1990 and the restoration of historical truth and justice. The Center in this finding, by failing to talk about Noreika's activities against people of Jewish ethnicity and the criminal activities of the LAF in Žemaitija, is in violation of the tasks set down for it by law and is operating against aims defined by law.

This historical finding is illegal and **violates** the principles of **fairness, objectivity, comprehensiveness and non-abuse of power** in article 3 of the Lithuanian law on public administration.

It should be noted as well that the International Commission for Assessing the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupational Regimes in Lithuania (academics doing research in the field of the Lithuanian Holocaust) also disagree with the Center's conclusions on Jonas Noreika. On March 10, 2019, members of the Commission issued a response to a public statement by the Center, a response which said:

"On August 22, 1941, and on September 10, 1941, Jonas Noreika, following the directives of Šiauliai military district Hans Gewecke appointed by the Germans, issued orders on removing the Jews of the military district to ghettos and on the confiscation of their property ... Almost all of the victims arrested under these orders were later murdered. This is the historical reality, based on indisputable documented proof. If this is not participation in the genocide of Jews who were Lithuanian citizens, then what is?"

"We cannot understand why the [Center] is defending an openly racist and fascist political group, the Lithuanian Nationalist Party, whose members who served in police battalions were among the most active persecutors and murderers of Jews."

[9] https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/j-noreika-organizavo-zydu-gelbejimo-tinkla-siauliuose-nustate-genocido-centras-56-1248784?
[10] https://www.ziniuradijas.lt/laidos/greiti-pietus/ar-siandien-sunku-buti-istoriku?video

The suppression of historical facts and the selective judgment of a person's actions do not reflect the truth about Jonas Noreika. The statements in the finding should be found to be disinformation, misleading the public, banned under article 9, section 2 of the Lithuanian law on the provision of information to the public. This is an on-going and intentional action committed by the Center.

VU professor Nerijus Šepetys says: "The [Center's] finding on Jonas Noreika doesn't present anything new, and nothing new is discovered about him from this document. It says nothing about justice, about truth, about law and certainly nothing about history." [11]

## Legal Standing

My grandfather Shmuel (Samuel) Gochin came from Papilė in the Šiauliai district in 1902.[12] My grandfather's brother Mones Gochin, his wife Sheyna and his daughters Leya, Rakhael, Tsila, Masha and Sara and his sons Samuel, Abe, Yakov, Yosel and Shmerl [13] (citizens of the Republic of Lithuania)[14] stayed resident in Papilė during World War II. According to the documents available, their fate was tragic, they died in the district of Šiauliai during the Holocaust carried out there (they were murdered on July 7, July 18 and October 2 in the Žagarė ghetto).[15]

The Holocaust touched my family directly. The mass murder of the Jews in the Šiauliai district under Jonas Noreika's watch ended the 600 years of history of the life of the Gochin family in Lithuania. My grandfather suffered greatly over the death of his brother and his brother's family and came down with chronic heart disease. I grew up with my grandfather, I listened to his stories and I myself experienced this same loss of family.

The existing Center finding offends me as the heir of the Gochin family. The unobjective assessment of person and actions of Jonas Noreika published by the Center detracts from and belittles the memory of my dead relatives.

My grandfather's family was murdered in the district under the command of Jonas Noreika, and therefore I do have standing to demand the Center annul this historical finding and thus remedy the non-monetary damage and harm they have done to me through their illicit and illegal actions.

The existing historical finding is illegal and therefore, based on article 15, section 1, part 6 of the law on public administration, I present this complaint and request the performance of an administrative procedure, and in the manner prescribed by law that an administrative decision be rendered on the violation of the rights and legitimate interests of Grant Arthur Gochin committed through the actions of the Center (article 19, section 1 of the law on public administration).

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[11] https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/istorikai-jei-lggrtc-pazyma-apie-j-noreika-butu-studento-darbas-ji-butu-ivertinta-labai-prastu-pazymiu-56-1249198?

[12] LCVA F 412 In 13, B6 L863 Shmuel Gochin šeimos sudėtis

[13] LCVA. F. 412. In. 13 B. 13 L. 242.

[14] LCVA F. 412. In. 12 B. 67. L. 225
Internal passport no. 623696 issued January 2, 1922, to Mones Gochin and six family members.

[15] These facts are stated in case no. A822-2124-2011 of the Lithuanian Supreme Administrative Court on July 21, 2011, in the case of the restoration of my, Grant Gochin's Lithuanian citizenship.

In light of what is explained above, I demand the Center annul and remove from all public view the historical finding **"On the Activities of Jonas Noreika (General Storm) in the Anti-Nazi Resistance," and that they announce this decision publicly, via the Baltic News Service.**

Respectfully,
Grant Arthur Gochin