LIETUVOS ŽYDŲ (LITVAKŲ) BENDRUOMENĖ

Lithuanian Jewish Community Statement on Genocide Center's Newest Report on Kazys Škirpa

2024-08-26

The Lithuanian Jewish Community representing 32 Lithuanian and foreign Jewish organizations categorically rejects the latest report and conclusion by the Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania regarding Kazys Škirpa.

We note that a ban on propagating totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and their ideologies has been in force in Lithuania since May of 2023. Under this law symbols of totalitarianism and authoritarianism-statues, street names, names of squares and other of other public locations- cannot be instituted, and those which are currently in existence must be removed from public space. The LJC is convinced Kazys Škirpa, whose publicly-made anti-Semitic statements and incitement to get rid of Jews gave rise to a wave of violence with such tragic results, should not be honored. Statues and commemorative plaques in his honor are a gigantic insult to the memory and relatives of the hundreds of thousands of Lithuanian Jews murdered in the Holocaust. All the more so bearing in mind that until now Lithuania has not established a national memorial commemorating the more than 200,000 victims of the Holocaust, our fellow citizens. Neither is there any monument paying honor to the heroism of Lithuania's rescuers of Jews who risked their own lives and those of their families.

The International Commission to Assess the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupational Regimes in Lithuania set up by the president of Lithuania has recognized the activities of the Lithuanian Activist Front and the Lithuanian Provisional Government, both led by Škirpa, as anti-Semitic. Chairman of the Commission's Nazi Crimes Subcommittee Millersville University professor Saulius Sužiedelis stated: " This is a statue to a man who led an organization which promoted violence against Lithuanian citizens of other ethnicity and which incited anti-Semitism. This is not a subjective judgment or interpretation, all of these statements are founded on historical facts, sources and documents."

The LJC cannot ignore these facts confirmed by historians. The attempt by the Genocide Center which prepared this report to justify or trivialize Škirpa's role in the tragic events of 1941 is not just misleading, but dangerous. It is not acceptable to claim Škirpa was not a participant in the establishment of the Tautinio darbo apsaugos batalionas) nor a participant in the later actions of that organization, including the horrific mass murders at the Seventh Fort in Kaunas. The report's claims that Škirpa was some sort of distant figure unconnected with these atrocities is not only factually incorrect but also an attempt to hide his true legacy.

This stance raises great concerns regarding Lithuania's international obligations as well. As a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Lithuania adopted IHRA's definition of anti-Semitism in 2018 and recommended its application to state institutions, and furthermore maintains a representative on IHRA's Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial Committee who is supposed to strengthen the country's accountability in countering all forms of Holocaust distortion. It would appear these obligations are *pro forma*. Plans currently being discussed for commemorating Kazys Škirpa are clearly a case of Holocaust revisionism, a harmful activity which IHRA has consistently condemned which threatens the execution of Lithuania's obligations and casts doubt upon the country's reliability in assessing the events of the past.

Another cause of great concern is the decision by Lithuania's so-called de-Sovietization commission regarding alleged danger to its members resulting in its decision not to broadcast its meetings to the public where decisions are made on whether statues and place-names do or do not propagate authoritarian and/or totalitarian regimes and their ideologies. While that commission chooses for itself a cowardly silence, the LJC is ready to talk loudly and openly. The LJC will continue to express publicly our opinions and feelings regarding the commemoration of Nazi collaborators who played significant roles in the Holocaust in Lithuania. We must take historical and moral responsibility for this sadly infamous expression in our country in order to defend Lithuania's democratic values and international reputation.

The LJC calls for the rejection of all attempts to rewrite history and to rehabilitate the perpetrators of Lithuania's darkest passage of history.

Executive Board of the Lithuania Jewish Community

Below: Genocide Center finding in Lithuanian.



LIETUVOS GYVENTOJŲ GENOCIDO IR REZISTENCIJOS TYRIMO CENTRAS

DĖL KAZIO ŠKIRPOS ASMENYBĖS
(istorinė–archyvinė pažyma)

2024-06-21 Nr. 9R–398 (9.4E)
Vilnius

Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad informuojame, kad Kazys Škirpa kaip asmenybė visuomenėje nepagrįstai vienareikšmiškai vertinamas. Tam tikrais laikotarpiais K. Škirpa veikė būtent ta kryptimi, kuria dabar siekiama jį pateikti visuomenei. Kai kuriais atvejais jo veikla buvo nepriekaištinga. Kai kuriais atvejais jo veikla turėjo ir tamsiąją pusę, t. y. būta antisemitinio, besikaršaviškumo su nacių Vokietija. Taip pat yra tokių, kuriuos K. Škirpa vertina tik neigiamai. Kazys Škirpa gimė 1895 m. vasario 18 d. Baltų apskritos Salocių valsčiuje. Nenaujdinę kasmet. 1911 m. baigė realinę mokyklą, po to studijavo Komercijos institute Petrograde. 1916 m. buvo mobilizuotas į Rusijos imperijos kariuomenę, baigė Petrašiūnų pragrindinį mokyklą, tarnavo 37-ajame šiltos lauką atsargos pulke Orenke įmanomiausiu kariniuku. Tais pačiais metais, grįžęs į Petrograd, mokė sudarantį laiškų kariuose dalinius Rusijos imperijoje, buvo Lietuvių karių sąjungos įgaliotinas prie Ukrainos vyriausiojo Kyjeve. 1918 m. bolševikams nusukūnus šią sąjungą, K. Škirpa veikė slaptame Vyriausiajame laiškų komitete, priklausė Lietuvių tautos taryba savarankiškai Rusijoje. 1918 m. vasario mėn. jis laukėnų Vilniuje, skatino nestabilizuojat organizuoti Lietuvos

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SHABBES! 2024.08.23 SHABBAT SHALOM! 2024.08.24
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SATURDAY PRAYERS: 10:00
BEGINNING OF PRAYERS: 19:30
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Senajame žemyne jau daugiau nei 20 metų minima Europos Žydų kultūros diena sugrįžta į Vilnių.
Tradicinėse pirmųjų rugsėjo sekmadienį – šiluart jis sutampa su rugsėjo 1-aja, vilniečius nuo pat ryto džiugins įvairiausi renginiai – nuo hebrajų ir jidiš kalbų pamokų Vilniaus choralinėje sinagogoje, ekskursijos po Žydiškąją sostinę su nepraleinkiamu gidu Viljamas Zitkauskas, Vilniaus Šolomo
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keliaukime po štetlus

Pakruojis synagogue

Kranto street no. 8, Pakruojis, Lithuania
telephone: +370 675 27613

Monday-Friday 9:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.
Saturday 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.
Sunday 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.
Closed on state holidays

Vilniaus Šolomo Aleichemo ORT gimnazija

We invite the public to submit any information or memories they have about the Jews murdered near Svenciuoniai in 1941. Please contact chairman of the Svencionys Jewish Community Moshe Shapiro: moisa50@mail.ru

Poem « Little Jewish Streets »

Leyb Stotsky [לייב סטאצקי]
Poem « Little Jewish Streets »
[ייִדישע גאסעלעך / YIDISHE GESELEKH]

Holocaust Atlas of Lithuania

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