

ASSOCIATION OF LITHUANIAN JEWS

Tel-Aviv, November 6, 1998

His Excellency
President Valdas Adamkus
Vilnius, Lithuania

Dear President Adamkus,

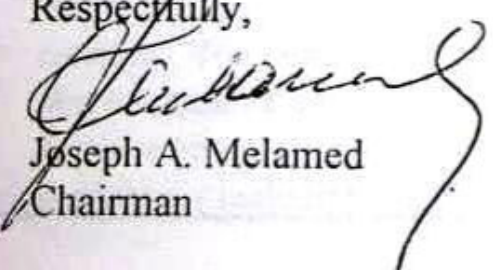
On behalf of the Association of Lithuanian Jews, the representative organization of Jews of Lithuanian origin all over the world, we urge you to change or cancel the historical commission you recently established to investigate the Nazi and Soviet occupations of your country.

The linking of the histories of the Nazi and Soviet occupations is the heart of the problem. More than any other factor, this false symmetry has been a major obstacle to any serious soul-searching by Lithuanian society in regard to the extensive collaboration of Lithuanians with the Nazis in the murder of Lithuanian Jewry. Even worse, false accusations and patent exaggerations regarding Jewish participation in Communist crimes against Lithuanians have been adduced time and again to explain, and in some cases even justify, the participation of Lithuanians in the murder of Jews during the Holocaust.

The combination of these two tragedies will not only fail to clarify the historical record, but will aggravate the existent tensions between Lithuanians and Jews. 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.

We therefore urge you to reconsider its mandate and either establish two separate commissions or cancel the entire project.

Respectfully,


Joseph A. Melamed
Chairman