

Basic positions in support of the Jews of Vilnius and all of Lithuania.

Andrius Kulikauskas, ms@ms.lt, +370 607 27 665

A) To listen to what Vilnius's Jews want. As far as I can understand, they want:

- A1) That Vilnius not honor those who planned, organized or committed crimes against humanity, especially against Lithuania's Jews.
- A2) That we respect their cemeteries.
- A3) That we understand that their official leadership may not always represent them adequately, especially when standing up to the state or vested interests on controversial issues.

B) That we care about what Vilnius lost due to the Holocaust, the many individuals, and also, the vibrant historic Lithuanian Jewish community.

- B1) That we embrace and cherish Vilnius's heritage as the Jerusalem of Lithuania, as a city that was once 40% Jewish and which as such has made a lasting contribution to world culture.
- B2) That we treasure Lithuanian Jewish heritage as keeping alive for us the culture and territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which was its original and natural context.
- B3) That we appreciate that the Holocaust is an extreme calamity, the loss of ALMOST ALL of Lithuania's Jews, and that it is callous and indecent for ethnic Lithuanians to claim that, as a people, they have suffered comparably.
- B3.1) That any legislation or pronouncements contradicting this position be repealed or retracted.
- B4) That in Vilnius we prominently honor individuals who worked to save Jews, naming streets, schools and institutions after them.
- B5) That individuals who, in modern times, committed crimes against humanity, including against Lithuania's Jews, not be held exemplary and not have streets, schools nor institutions named after them.
- B5.1) That the Lithuanian Nationalist Party be deemed a genocidal organization and that its national and local leaders, such as Jonas Noreika, be deemed, as such, supporters of genocide.
- B6) That the Lithuanian government officially condemn, revoke and apologize for the sycophant leaders who ingratiated themselves with Nazi Germany, betrayed the wisdom of Lithuania's Grand Dukes and insidiously "revoked their hospitality" to Lithuania's Jews.
- B7) That June 23 be declared a National Day of Conscience to reflect upon the utmost virtue that we have failed to live by but must aspire to.

B8) That we have in Vilnius a National Symbol of Empathy for Lithuania's Jews.

B9) That we appreciate and consider that a very opportune symbol would be to abandon plans for renovating the Sports Palace, to return the territory to the Lithuanian Jewish community, and to support them in whatever plans they may have, such as restoring the historic cemetery.

- B9.1) That, at the site, a temporary installation be permitted where individuals and groups, whether in person or by way of social media, could express their solidarity in restoring the historic Jewish cemetery as a symbol of empathy for Lithuania's Jews.
- B9.2) That the heritage status of the Sports Palace be revoked or clarified as imposing absolutely no obstacle to any plans for its complete dismantling in preparation for the restoration of the Jewish

cemetery.

B9.3) That the government engage international representatives of Orthodox Litvak Jewry who are committed to restoring the cemetery, that they appoint local representatives, independent of the Lithuanian government, to discuss the future of the cemetery.

C) That we publish and document the truths which have been suppressed and further investigate them.

C1) That ALL of Lithuania's leadership in 1941 stood for a "Lithuania without Jews" and planned, organized, incited, supported or committed crimes against humanity against them.

C2) That it is a total MYTH that Jews wronged Lithuanians and provoked revenge. This myth was fabricated by Kazys Skirpa in July, 1940 and promoted by Lithuanian leaders before, during and after the Holocaust, to this very day.

C3) That, unfortunately, there was WIDESPREAD support expressed by Lithuanian leaders to the Paleckis "people's government" in June, 1940, and that this, along with President Smetona's running away from Lithuania, in the context of the Nazi occupation of Klaipeda in 1939 and the Soviet occupation of Vilnius in 1939 and the rest of Lithuania in 1941, made for a DEEP SHAME among Lithuanians, who so bullied ended up blaming and bullying Lithuania's Jews.

C4) That Lithuanian leaders, upon arriving in the free world, misrepresented the truth and altered documents in developing a history which did not admit their involvement in crimes against Lithuania's Jews.

D) That we include those who championed truth as the basis for empathy and dismiss those who fought against it.

D1) That the government abandon support for an official state history but rather prefer to make way for a variety of independent views, as befitting a democratic society.

D2) That the leadership of the Genocide Center, in particular, Birute Terese Burauskaite, be dismissed.

D3) That the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania be dissolved.

D4) That the government appoint a political statesperson responsible for clarifying the government's positions on historical matters as above and for considering them anew.

D5) That the government recognize the lifetime achievements of Jewish partisans Yitzhak Arad, Rachel Margolis, Fania Brantovsky, Sara Ginaite, and Jewish leaders Pinchos Fridberg and Joseph Mehlamed and apologize to them for having prosecutors harrass, intimidate and malign them in 2006-2015, while never charging them with any crimes.

D6) That the national or local government have an ombudsman responsible for assisting and including all people, but especially minorities and individual Jews (Rabbi Krinsky, Ruta Bloshtein, Dovid Katz, etc.) who encounter harrassment from or want to make connections with all manner of institutions, public or private.

D7) That the national and local government meet with all interested Jews living in Vilnius and Lithuania to reappraise and redesign the role of the official local Jewish community given its lack of independence on essential issues.

E) That, as in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Lithuania's Jews be recognized as an ever vulnerable minority.

E1) That the Republic of Lithuania not allow Lithuanian nationalists to link national symbols such as the Cathedral square, the Parliament and the Vilnius old town with intimidation of Lithuania's Jews or other minorities.

F) That the government work together with Orthodox Litvak Jewry to encourage the development of an independent World Lithuanian Jewish Community, analogous to the World Lithuanian Community, to foster ties with Lithuanian Jews around the world, and their descendants, to maintain Lithuanian Jewish heritage and develop future possibilities.

F1) That one joint project be the archeological investigation of the remnants of the Great Synagogue Courtyard and their adaptation as a space for contemplation and prayer.

F2) That another project be the preservation of Lithuania's last Jewish anti-Nazi underground fort.

F3) That another project be with the people of Vilnius and Kaunas to engage every town in Lithuania where there once was a Jewish settlement (shtetl), that in each historic town center there be a sign commemorating the Jewish community's population, cultural history and contributions, and testifying to the tragedy of their loss in the Holocaust.

F4) That Vilnius be the capital of a revived culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as treasured by Lithuanian Jews to this day.