

November 2, 2021

[From] Grant Arthur Gochin  
10900 Winnetka Ave.  
Chatsworth, CA 91311  
USA

[To] Gitanas Nausėda, President, Republic of Lithuania

Agila Barzdienė, chancellor of Lithuanian State Awards

Copy: (according to list)

Request: Regarding the Annulment of State Awards

Your Excellency,

I am a Lithuanian citizen who is battling Holocaust denial in Lithuania.

At the Malmö International Forum on Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Anti-Semitism in October of 2021, you called for not tolerating antisemitism, Holocaust denial and attempts to falsify history, you emphasized the importance of serious academic research and you called for expanding public dialogue based on historical facts. These are strong pledges which deserve praise.

I am concerned that the Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania actively denies the participation of people in the Holocaust. Ignoring the historical documents I discovered and the findings of the International Commission to Assess the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupational Regimes in Lithuania, year after year [the Genocide Center] repeats the same claims publicly: that Jonas Noreika is a hero who was awarded the Great Cross of the Order of the Cross of Vytis and who was rehabilitated by a decision from the Supreme Court of Lithuania; that Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis is also a hero, also awarded the Great Cross of the Order of the Cross of Vytis and wholly rehabilitated of antisemitic activities and collaboration with the Nazis by the US Congress in 1975.

In fact, Jonas Noreika was convicted and rehabilitated only for anti-Soviet activities. The Soviet government did not investigate his actions in regards to the extermination of Lithuanian citizens of Jewish ethnicity, nor did they render any verdict regarding this, and therefore the Supreme Court of Lithuania following independence did not rehabilitate Jonas Noreika for these actions.

Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis likewise was not wholly exonerated by the US Congress. As a US Congress letter dated September 25, 2019, addressed to the prime minister of Lithuania shows, the investigation of Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis was halted in 1975 because he died, and no decision regarding his exoneration was made.

The International Commission to Assess the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupational Regimes in Lithuania admitted in their findings of 2005 that the Lithuanian Provisional Government approved the isolation of Jews and the confiscation of their property, and didn't distance themselves publicly from the mass murder of Lithuanian citizens of Jewish origin. The Commission also admitted the National Labor Protection force (Tautinio darbo apsauga or TDA)

battalions were guilty of perpetrating the mass murder of Jews. The Commission also admitted the "Regulations on the Status of Jews" issued by the Provisional Government were the clearest expression of antisemitic policies by this government.

Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis was the actual head of the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) government founded by Kazys Škirpa and was the highest political leader in charge of decisions made by the entire government and the execution of those decisions.

In June and July of 1941, Jonas Noreika was a representative of this LAF government and the highest-ranking political figure in the Telšiai district. He was present personally in Plungė and Telšiai when the isolation and murder of the Jews took place. Jonas Noreika ordered the establishment of the Žagarė ghetto, appointed the town's new burgermeister and personally issued orders to the latter throughout the period of the existence of this ghetto. The Šiauliai district administration he headed paid salaries "for work performed" to the soldiers of the Šiauliai battalion and also organized the implementation of his order for the confiscation of Jewish property. Jonas Noreika's signatures also appear on documents for the removal of Jews, slave labor performed by inmates of the Šiauliai ghetto and the exploitation of POWs for farmwork in exchange for payments.

The Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania publicly denies these facts, but there are archive documents, the findings of the International Commission and the aforementioned letter from the US Congress showing they are true. The Holocaust denial by this institution doesn't have the approval of the International Commission nor of noted Lithuanian historians. Completely ignoring the historical documents, the Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania maintains the position Jonas Noreika and Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis are Lithuanian heroes recognized by the state's highest awards, and that any alleged crimes against humanity have been rehabilitated at the highest level of state.

This is the official position of the Republic of Lithuania at the present time. The state (represented by the Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Residents of Lithuania) recognizes Jonas Noreika and Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis as heroes and knights of the Order of the Cross of Vytis, while their documented crimes against humanity are suppressed and denied. These highest decorations of state are the staff of authority for these characters used to deny their culpability in Holocaust crimes in Lithuania.

Article 18 of the Lithuania law on state awards states that in the event actions by those awarded tarnishes the reputation of the recipient, the president of the Republic of Lithuania may remove these people from the list of recipients of these awards.

Based on the above, I ask you to initiate consultations with the Lithuanian History Institute and the History Faculty of Vilnius University in order to receive unbiased information about the culpability of Jonas Noreika and Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis in the Holocaust in Lithuania and based on this information I request you adopt a decision to remove Jonas Noreika and Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis from the list of recipients of orders of knighthood.

Respectfully,

Grant Arthur Gochin  
November 2, 2021  
[signature]

Appended:

1. US Congress letter to Lithuanian prime minister, September 25, 2019;
2. List of recipients of copies of this request.

1. Zev Krengel, SA Jewish Board of Deputies
2. Faina Kukliansky, LJC
3. Robert Gilchrist, USA Ambassador
4. Yossi Levy, Israel Ambassador
5. President Herzog, Israel
6. David Harris, AJC
7. Andrew Baker, AJC
8. Daniel S. Mariaschin, CEO of B'nai B'rith International
9. Ronald Lauder, World Jewish Congress
10. Moshe Kantor, World Jewish Congress
11. Ambassador Chris J. Lazaris, IHRA
12. Yair Lapid, FM Israel
13. Dani Dayan, Chairman of Yad Vashem
14. Dillon Hosier, CEO of Israeli American Civic Action Network
15. Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE)
16. Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
17. Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA)
18. Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA)
19. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA)
20. Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-CA)
21. Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA)
22. Rep. Lou Correa (D-CA)
23. Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL)
24. Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA)
25. Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA)
26. Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (D-CA)
27. Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA)
28. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)
29. Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD)
30. Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA)
31. Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA)
32. Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC)
33. Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX)
34. Senator Durbin
35. Senator Feinstein
36. Senator Padilla
37. Senator Schumer
38. VP Harris
39. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ)

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30TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

# CONGRESSMAN BRAD SHERMAN

SERVING THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

September 25, 2019

Hon. Saulius Skvernelis  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania  
In Care of: Hon. Rolandas Kriščiūnas  
Ambassador the Republic of Lithuania  
Embassy of Lithuania  
2622 16th St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009

Re: Nazi-Era Lithuanian Leader Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis

Your Excellency,

As a Member of Congress, I am deeply committed to maintaining strong ties between the United States and Lithuania.

As a result of recent statements issued by the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, an agency of your government, I am writing to ask you to either provide specific and credible references to the exoneration and rehabilitation of Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis, former Minister of Education and acting Prime Minister under the Provisional Government of Lithuania in 1941, or to publicly retract the Centre's claims for the misstatement of facts and misuse of U.S. Congressional documents in your government's efforts to address the history of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

On three separate occasions dating back to February 26, 2018, the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (LGGRTC) asserted that the United States Congress and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) "completely exonerated" Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis for culpability in the murder of Jews in Lithuania.<sup>1</sup>

The United States Department of Justice conducted an investigation into the allegation that from June 23, 1941 to July 12, 1941, during the life of the interim Provisional Government of Lithuania, Mr. Brazaitis, as Minister of Education and acting Prime Minister, "was responsible

<sup>1</sup> Letter Reference 55R-21, 14R-82; DELFI, "LGGRTC: The Genocide Research Center Will Not Stand Vulgar Pressure In Response to Mr. Vinokurui," March 8, 2019. Letter Reference 14R-53, dated February 26, 2018.

for the issuance and enforcement of repressive edicts against the Jewish minority.”<sup>2</sup> The letter sent from Commissioner Leonard Chapman, Jr. to Chairman Joshua Eilberg of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law in December 1974 states that in an attempt to elicit testimony from Mr. Brazaitis as to the activities of the Provisional Lithuanian Government, Mr. Brazaitis was unable to testify as he had sustained his fourth heart attack and was hospitalized. Mr. Brazaitis died on October 24, 1974. The letter then states that in the opinion of the review committee, “further investigation in these matters appeared unwarranted.”<sup>3</sup> As a result, the Immigration and Naturalization Service determined to remove Mr. Brazaitis’ name from the active list of Alleged Nazi War Criminals residing in the United States. The U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Congressional Committees do not usually continue investigations after a subject has died; thus, they would have concluded the investigation without findings—exactly as the letter indicates.

Notably, the review of Mr. Brazaitis by the U.S. Department of Justice was cursory and was conducted only as a result of pressure by Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman of New York, a member of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and International Law of which Mr. Eilberg was Chairman, to investigate and deport Nazis who had been offered protection by the U.S. government.<sup>4</sup> In 1974, the Immigration and Naturalization Service was “ill-equipped” and made “half-attempts” to deport known Nazis, until a formal office was established for this purpose in the U.S. Department of Justice in 1979.<sup>5</sup> In 1974, Congresswoman Holtzman herself accused the INS of conducting a “half-hearted, dilatory investigation” of more than 60 alleged Nazi war criminals and charged specifically that the investigation was headed by “three part-time bureaucrats without the background or authority to direct an investigation of this nature,” who failed to contact the German or Israeli governments for pertinent data, the National Archives in Washington, or Soviet Jews now in Israel who may have had pertinent information.<sup>6</sup> Similar to a number of other known Nazi perpetrators who emigrated to the United States following World War II, Mr. Brazaitis gained entry to the United States as a result of his “operational value” for the Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>7</sup>

Since the United States Department of Justice conducted its investigations into Mr. Brazaitis’ responsibility for “repressive edicts against the Jewish minority,” key documents regarding the activities of the Provisional Lithuanian Government have been made public. In 2001, the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania historian Rytas Narvydas discovered and published the authentic minutes and decrees of the Provisional Government. In 1974, problematically, these documents were held by the Soviets. The volume included the “Regulations on the Situation of the Jews” with Brazaitis’ signature, which asserts that the Jews had exploited the Lithuanian nation economically for hundreds of years, had demoralized it, and

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Letter to Chairman Eilberg from Commissioner Chapman, Jr., December 1974.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Brazaitis was a “covert contact” of the Central Intelligence Agency.

<sup>5</sup> Eric Lichtblau, *The Nazis Next Door*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Polakoff, “INS Accused of Conducting Dilatory Probe of More than 60 War Criminals,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily News Bulletin*, May 21, 1974, [http://pdfs.jta.org/1974/1974-05-21\\_098.pdf?\\_ga=2.142121586.1937063510.1569271901-1798217195.1563368735](http://pdfs.jta.org/1974/1974-05-21_098.pdf?_ga=2.142121586.1937063510.1569271901-1798217195.1563368735).

<sup>7</sup> April 19, 1955, “Re-entry Permit for Juozas Brazaitis,”

[https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/BRAZAITIS%2C%20JUOZAS\\_0072.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/BRAZAITIS%2C%20JUOZAS_0072.pdf).

in recent years, under the mantle of Bolshevism, had most widely developed their battle against Lithuania's independence and the Lithuanian nation. The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre also included the minutes from a meeting on July 5, 1941, in which Brazaitis and the Provisional Government approved requested funding for 824 members of the TDA Battalion and the concentration camp at Kaunas VII fort. From June 28 to July 6, the TDA Battalion murdered approximately 5,000 Jewish men, and held many Jewish women and children without food or water at Kaunas VII fort.

As the Immigration and Naturalization Service only considered the actions of the Provisional Government from June 23, 1941 to July 12, 1941, the approval of funding for the TDA Battalion and the conclusion of the "Regulations on the Situation of the Jews" were not considered as such actions fell outside of the designated time frame.

Finally, in 2005, the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania concluded their review of "the Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews during Summer and Fall of 1941."<sup>8</sup> The Commission determined that the Provisional Government approved segregating the Jews of Lithuania and expropriating their property, and did not publicly disassociate itself from the murder of Lithuania's Jewish citizens. To this point, the Commission recognized the TDA Battalion as a "Responsible Agency" as a result of their participation in the killings of Jews. The Provisional Government funded the TDA. The Commission also concluded that the Provisional Government's approval of the "Regulations on the Situation of the Jews" was the most comprehensive expression of the Government's official anti-Semitism. Thus, there is no question as to Mr. Brazaitis' involvement in cementing Lithuania's anti-Semitic history and the considerable violence that took place before the arrival of the Germans.

I hope you will take concrete steps to demonstrate your government's commitment to accurate historical portrayal and recognize the darkest realities of the Holocaust.

Sincerely,



BRAD SHERMAN  
Member of Congress

CC: Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism  
Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues

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<sup>8</sup> International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, "The Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews during Summer and Fall of 1941: Sources and Analysis," CONCLUSIONS, April 20, 2005.

Grant Arthur Gochin  
10900 Winnetka ave, Chatsworth, CA 91311  
Jungtinės Amerikos Valstijos

Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentas  
Gitanas Nausėda

Lietuvos valstybės ordinų kanclerė  
Agila Barzdienė

Kopija: (pagal sąrašą)

## **PRAŠYMAS**

### **Dėl valstybinio apdovanojimo panaikinimo**

Jūsų Ekselencija,

Esu Lietuvos Respublikos pilietis, kovojantis su Holokausto neigimu Lietuvoje.

Tarptautiniame Malmės Holokausto atminimo ir kovos su antisemitizmu forume 2021 m. spalio mėn. Jūs kvietėte netoleruoti antisemitizmo, Holokausto neigimo ir bandymų klastoti istoriją, pabrėžėte stiprių akademinų tyrimų svarbą bei paraginate plėtoti atvirą dialogą, besiremiantį istoriniais faktais. Tai yra stiprūs ir sveikinti įsipareigojimai.

Man susirūpinimą kelia tai, kad Lietuvos Respublikos Gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimų centras aktyviai neigia asmenų dalyvavimą Holokauste. Ignoruojant mano atrastus istorinius dokumentus, Tarptautinės komisijos nacių ir sovietinio okupacinių režimų nusikaltimams Lietuvoje įvertinti išvadas, metai po metų yra viešai kartojami tie patys teiginiai: Jonas Noreika yra didvyris, apdovanotas Vyčio kryžiaus ordino didžiuoju kryžiumi ir reabilituotas Lietuvos Aukščiausiojo Teismo nutarimu; Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis taip pat didvyris, apdovanotas Vyčio kryžiaus ordino didžiuoju kryžiumi, dėl antisemitinės veiklos ir kolaboravimo su naciais visiškai išteisintas JAV Kongrese 1975 m.

Po teisybei Jonas Noreika buvo nuteistas ir reabilituotas tik dėl antisovietinių veiksmų. Jo veiklos dalyvaujant žydų tautybės Lietuvos piliečių naikinime sovietų valdžia netyrė, nuosprendžio neskyrė, todėl Lietuvos Aukščiausiasis Teismas, atkūrus nepriklausomybę, dėl šios veiklos Jono Noreikos nereabilitavo.

Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis tuo tarpu nebuvo visiškai išteisintas JAV Kongrese. Kaip liudija 2019 m. rugsėjo 25 d. JAV Kongreso raštas Lietuvos Ministrui pirmininkui, tyrimas Juozo Ambrazevičiaus-Brazaičio atžvilgiu 1975 m. buvo nutrauktas dėl jo mirties ir joks išteisinantis sprendimas nebuvo priimtas.

Tarptautinės komisijos nacių ir sovietinio okupacinių režimų nusikaltimams Lietuvoje įvertinti 2005 m. išvadose pripažino, kad Laikinoji vyriausybė pritarė žydų izoliavimui, jų turto nusavinimui ir viešai neatsiribojo nuo žydų tautybės Lietuvos piliečių žudynių. Komisija taip pat pripažino, kad Laikinosios vyriausybės įkurti Tautinio darbo apsaugos (TDA) bataljonai yra atsakingi už dalyvavimą žydų žudynėse. Komisija taip pat pripažino, kad Laikinosios vyriausybės išleisti „Žydų padėties nuostatai“ buvo pati aiškiausia vyriausybės antisemitinės politikos išraiška.

Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis faktiškai vadovavo Kazio Škirpos įkurto Lietuvos Aktyvistų Fronto (LAF) vyriausybei, buvo aukščiausias politinis vadovas, atsakingas už visos vyriausybės sprendimus ir jų įgyvendinimą.



Jonas Noreika 1941 m. birželio – liepos mėnesiais buvo LAF vyriausybės atstovas, aukščiausia politinė figūra Telsių apskrityje. Jis fiziškai buvo Plungėje ir Telšiuose, kuomet vyko žydų izoliavimas ir žudymas. Jonas Noreika įsakymu įkūrė Žagarės getą, paskyrė naują miesto burmistrą ir geto egzistavimo laikotarpiu asmeniškai duodavo jam vykdytinus nurodymus. Jo vadovaujama Šiaulių apskrities administraciją „už darbą“ šiuo laikotarpiu mokėjo atlyginimą Šiaulių bataljono kariams, taip pat organizavo vykdymą Jono Noreikos išleistų įsakymų dėl žydų turto nusavinimo. Jono Noreikos parašai taip pat yra ant dokumentų dėl žydų iškeldinimo, priverstinio Šiaulių geto gyventojų darbo, karo belaisvių išnaudojimo už užmokestį ūkio darbams.

Lietuvos Respublikos Gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimų centras šias aplinkybes viešai neigia, vienok archyvų dokumentai, Tarptautinės komisijos išvados ir minėtas JAV Kongreso raštas liudija priešingai. Šios institucijos vykdomas Holokausto neigimas nėra palaikomas nei Tarptautinės komisijos nei žymių Lietuvos istorikų. Lietuvos Respublikos Gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimų centras visiškai nepaisydamas istorinių dokumentų laikosi pozicijos, kad Jonas Noreika ir Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis yra Lietuvos didvyriai, apdovanoti aukščiausiais valstybiniais apdovanojimais, o dėl galimų nusikaltimų žmogiškumui padarymo reabilituoti aukščiausiojo valstybinio lygiu.

Tokia yra oficiali Lietuvos Respublikos pozicija šiandien. Valstybė (atstovaujama Lietuvos Respublikos Gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimų centro) Joną Noreiką ir Juozą Ambrazevičių-Brazaitį pripažįsta didvyriais, Vyčio Kryžiaus ordino kavaleriais, o dokumentuoti jų nusikaltimai žmogiškumui yra nutylimi ir neigiami. Aukščiausio lygio valstybiniai apdovanojimai yra šių asmenų autoriteto ramstis, kuriuo yra naudojamosi neigiant jų prisidėjimą prie Holokausto Lietuvoje .

Lietuvos Respublikos valstybės apdovanojimų įstatymo 18 straipsnis nustato, kad tuo atveju, jei apdovanojimų veika žemina apdovanojo vardą, Respublikos Prezidentas gali išbraukti šiuos asmenis iš ordinų kavalielių sąrašo.

Vadovaujantis tuo kas pasakyta prašau Jūsų inicijuoti konsultacijas su Lietuvos Istorijos institutu ir Vilniaus universiteto istorijos fakultetu, siekiant gauti objektyvią informaciją apie Jono Noreikos ir Juozo Ambrazevičiaus-Brazaičio prisidėjimą prie Holokausto Lietuvoje ir šios informacijos pagrindu priimti sprendimą išbraukti Joną Noreiką ir Juozą Ambrazevičių-Brazaitį iš ordinų kavalielių sąrašo.

Pagarbiai,

Grant Arthur Gochin  
2021 m. lapkričio 2 d.



PRIDEDAMA:

1. 2021-09-25 JAV Kongreso raštas Lietuvos ministrui pirmininkui;
2. Prašymo kopijos gavėjų sąrašas.