

## V. Sinica. Lithuania doesn't glorify Nazis and Noreika wasn't one (a response to Silvia Foti)



Silvia Foti is a granddaughter of the anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet resistance member Jonas Noreika, participant of the June Uprising in 1941, imprisoned by Nazis in Stutthof in 1943, returned to Lithuania to organise new resistance in 1945, captured, tortured and killed by the KGB in 1947.

She has for the past several years globally propagated the account of him being a Nazi collaborator. Quite recently she published a book, titled "The Nazi's Granddaughter", and has been promoting it all over the American media. She also authored **an article** in the New York Times, and just a few days ago gave **an interview** on BBC's HARDtalk.

The title of the book itself is a downright lie, as Jonas Noreika was never a member of the National Socialist Party and never identified

himself with the Nazi ideas. The subtitle of the book, calling him a war criminal, is also deceitful, considering it's not a mere assessment, but a legal status, which was never granted to Noreika. These, however, are far from the only lies perpetuated by **Silvia Foti**.

## The First Accusation

There are two main accusations made by Silvia Foti regarding her **grandfather**. The first one proclaims that Jonas Noreika personally gave the order to execute 1,800 Jews in the Plungė area. She bases this claim on the memoirs of Aleksandras Pakalniškis, according to which **Jonas Noreika** gave the order, and I quote, "to shoot every last one of them". In addition to that, during her visit to Lithuania, somebody informed her that after giving the aforementioned order, her grandfather moved to a house that belonged to an affluent Jewish family.

The memoirs of Pakalniškis have often been cited in Lithuania's public sphere by various publicists, including Paulius Gritėnas, Rimdyvas Valatka, and others. For reasons unknown, none of them seems to care much about the fact that researchers have undeniably confirmed that Pakalniškis' memoirs contradict historical facts, and thus cannot be considered a reliable source. By the way, this accusation remains stated as fact in Noreika's English Wikipedia page.

## GRRCL's Answer

In 2015, the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (GRRCL) presented an official report regarding the activities of Jonas Noreika during the period of Nazi occupation. The report states, that:

a) The commandant of the town of Plungė was Povilas Alimas, not Jonas Noreika. In fact, **Noreika's** name is completely absent from any and all Hilfspolizei member lists of the Plungė area, as confirmed in the testimony given by priest Povilas Pukys. Noreika was not even in Plungė during that time.

b) It was Povilas Alimas who oversaw the dislocation of execution of the Jews from Plungė near the Kaušėnai village, which is exactly what Jonas Noreika is accused of in the aforementioned memoirs, spread by Silvia Foti.

c) Jonas Noreika could not, in fact, give such an order of execution at all, since decisions of that sort were exclusively in the hands of the Nazi occupation regime.

## The Second Accusation

Silvia Foti also claims that Jonas Noreika, quote, "signed orders to send thousands of Jews to their eventual deaths". She is referring to the order by Noreika, dated August 22 of 1941, for the Jews in the Šiauliai area to move to the Žagarė ghetto, which was being established at that time. In Lithuanian media there were claims that Jonas Noreika supervised the founding of the Šiauliai ghetto as well, but this is factually incorrect, as it was finished before he became district chief. Silvia Foti, rather deliberately, skips over the details of what exactly she means by "signed the orders".



Those orders were not given by Jonas Noreika; the orders regarding the founding of the ghetto were prepared by the Šiauliai County Gebietskommissar Hans Gewecke. As an officer of the civilian government, Jonas Noreika had no power over any matters regarding the Jews; his role was to communicate these orders further down the chain of command, which is exactly what he did. Considering the eventual consequences of this action, it can indeed be considered immoral and shameful. Ultimately, decommissioning of both ghettos in Šiauliai and Žagarė began in the summer of 1944, when Jonas Noreika was already imprisoned in

the Stutthof concentration camp. However, it must be stated clearly that by signing these orders, Jonas Noreika could not have foreseen their consequences.

## **The Perception of Ghettos in 1941**

The truth is that the founding of ghettos in Lithuania in the summer of 1941 was not widely associated with the execution of Jews. The majority of Lithuanians and, importantly, of Jews as well were unaware that the establishment of ghettos would lead to the elimination of their residents; Jonas Noreika was not an exception to this. On the contrary, he knew that following the Nazi occupation, the free Jews living outside the ghettos were rounded up, dislocated, and executed. Such executions took place in Plungė as well, of which Jonas Noreika was also falsely accused. Not only Noreika, but the Jews themselves saw the establishment of ghettos as a horrible, yet viable way of surviving the war.

This is most evident in the testimonies given by ghetto residents, such as Abba Kovner or Yitzhak Arad, the later initiators of the Vilnius ghetto uprising; they and others recalled how difficult it was to persuade the Jewish residents of the ghetto to revolt and flee, simply because many of the Jews believed they could survive the war in the ghetto until the eventual defeat of Nazi Germany. The very same propaganda was disseminated by the Nazis themselves, warning Lithuanian Jews that outside the ghettos, Lithuanians were supposedly hunting them down and that they would be safe inside; members of the Lithuanian local authorities, appointed by Provisional Government, were presented with an inverted set of arguments, that there are many communists among the Jews and causes the threat to Nazis in cities' streets.

The decommissioning of the ghettos ultimately proved the contrary to be true, but Jonas Noreika communicated Gawecke's orders in the summer of 1941, while the Jews were still actively killed outside the ghettos, but considered relatively safe inside. Gawecke himself would later claim being unaware of the fact that ghettos were established for the purpose of eliminating their residents; both American and German courts found him not guilty, and it would be hard to accuse them of acquitting Nazis or Nazi collaborators. I am in no way claiming that Jonas Noreika thought he was saving the Jews by sending them to the ghetto, but it's obvious that he had no reason to believe that by doing so he was decreasing their probability of survival.

## **Noreika - Rescuer of the Jews**

Undoubtedly aware of the fact, Silvia Foti purposely refrains from mentioning that Jonas Noreika himself was one of the initiators of the network for rescuing Jews in the Šiauliai County. This was confirmed in a testimony given by Jonas Borevičius, another well-known and recognized rescuer of the Jews, in a trial of another Lithuanian during the Cold War era. According to him, it was Jonas Noreika who got him involved with the rescue network and personally protected the

members of the network as much as his influence and powers allowed for. The testimony was corroborated by Domas Jasaitis, another recognized rescuer of the Jews. These facts were also included in the aforementioned official report by the GRRCL and are explained in more detail in an article by the current Lithuanian Minister of Defence Arvydas Anušauskas.

## **Collaborator?**

Why did Noreika involve himself in the provisional government appointed position in the Nazi-occupied Lithuania at all? Because of this, he is being accused of colluding with the Nazis, but the reality is much more complex. One of the victories achieved by the June Uprising in Lithuania was the ability of the provisional government to appoint municipal officers. After all, having local Nazi supporters occupy these positions was not in the interests of the Lithuanian people.

Even more importantly, there was a plan for the officers appointed by the provisional government to prepare for an eventual uprising against the Nazi regime, using their greater influence, access to resources and other means of preparation. This is exactly what differentiates these "colluders" from the later, true collaborators with the Soviet regime, who did nothing to help liberate Lithuania from the Soviet occupation and had no intention to. In fulfilling the will of the provisional government, Jonas Noreika accepted the position he was appointed to, and was forced to communicate the orders that ran contrary to his own beliefs; however, he used every means available to him to ease their resulting consequences by organizing the rescuing of the Jews in the Šiauliai County.

## **Slandering of the Uprising**

It is important to note that Silvia Foti's libel goes beyond Jonas Noreika by defaming the entirety of the June Uprising. During the BBC's HARDtalk interview, she said, quote: "this Lithuanian Activist Front [...] worked with the Germans to have this uprising". This is an absolute lie, disproved multiple times by several historians. During the June Uprising, Colonel Kazys Škirpa, leader of the Lithuanian Activist Front and Lithuania's ambassador in Berlin, was kept under house arrest.

The uprising was not at all in the interest of the Nazis. They intended to be greeted as liberators, but instead found Lithuanians having already driven the Soviets away on their own. The Nazis sought to appoint the governing officials and structures but instead found a provisional government already in place. They never approved of the provisional government, and after failing to manipulate it, ordered it to cease all of its activities after a single month. In no way was the Lithuanian Activist Front, nor the June Uprising, nor the provisional government a Nazi project or even in their interest. On the contrary, it was a major obstacle which the Nazis had to deal with.

## **The Defamation of Lithuania**

Silvia Foti's remarks are libel not only to Jonas Noreika, but also the entire country of Lithuania. Lithuania has memorialized Noreika's legacy, awarded him with the highest decorations of the state, and he is held in high regard by a large portion of Lithuanian citizens. If Silvia Foti's accusations are to be believed, they would mean that Lithuania is glorifying a Nazi collaborator. Considering the shame it would bring Lithuania in the eyes of the international community, our country has a clear obligation to refute these accusations thrown at Jonas Noreika and the June Uprising. For reasons unknown, however, the Lithuanian government and its diplomatic structures are indifferently silent in the face of such slander, while our neighbouring countries, especially Poland, who find themselves under similar accusations in the foreign media, immediately respond to the claims in a principled manner. As the person responsible for initiating the hanging of a memorial plaque for Jonas Noreika in 2019, I also feel a personal responsibility to provide answers to such accusations.

In Conclusion Silvia Foti was inspired to defame her grandfather and the country of Lithuania by a Litvak lawyer Grant Gochin, who himself has for the past several years been busy slandering Lithuania all across the global media, sometimes even blaming Lithuania for situation in the interwar situation in then Poland occupied Vilnius. Gochin was also involved in several legal battles with the GRRCL regarding the historical evaluation of Jonas Noreika, all

of which he lost. This has stopped neither him, nor his supporters from spreading disinformation, even when Silvia Foti herself admits to having no concrete evidence to back any of these claims. Lithuania cannot remain indifferent in the face of such libel; it must respond to the allegations regarding Jonas Noreika, the June Uprising, and Lithuania's alleged glorification of supposed Nazi.

*The views expressed in the article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Lithuania Tribune.*

## You may like

**Idealių pusryčių receptas tiems, kas nori numesti svorio ir atsisveikinti su pilvu**

traffix.lt

**Nealkoholinė kepenų suriebėjimo liga gresia kas ketvirtam – kaip mylėti savo kepenis**

P  
R  
„|  
jč

## Prof V. Landsbergis speech on March 11, 2021

## **March 11: a path to the restoration of the independent State of Lithuania**

## **During January 13 events important mission was entrusted by Lithuania to an Estonian**

## **Prof. Landsbergis' speech on January 13, 2021: Lithuania's unique historic mission**

## **Resolution on to defenders and victims of freedom of Lithuania in Seimas**

## **Monument to partisan leader, Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas, unveiled**

Ad removed. [Details](#)

## **V. Valiušaitis. Once again: why did we revolt in June 1941?**

## **Anušauskas: "Occupation", "deportations", and other "forbidden" words in history exams**

## **Gestapo and NKVD: A History of Chekist-Nazi Cooperation**

## **A tragic Lithuanian partisan story**

## **Seimas adopted resolution on the anniversary of the end of World War II**

## **Vilnius breathes life into the Great Synagogue of Vilna**



## **Nobuki Sugihara to attend the opening exhibition in memory of his father**

## **Anušauskas. The power of a symbol**

## **The Gestapo and the NKVD: a history of Soviet-Nazi cooperation**

## **Putin's parallel world and the return of Stalin**

## **MP Anušauskas: Strong testimony of Jesuit priest exonerates Jonas Noreika-General Storm of partic...**

## **Stancikas on the new evidence on Jonas Noreika**

**Polish PM Morawiecki: President Putin has lied again**

**Landsbergis: Those of good conscience should hurry to apologize to General Storm**

**The last supper of Vanagas (the Hawk) November 29, Friday**

## **Bukovsky, the lion of man. Tribute to friend**

## **Freedom Day and Stockholm Syndrome**

## **Vytautas Landsbergis. The Sąjūdis uprising and the revolution of the Baltic Way**

Ad removed. [Details](#)

## **Rasa Čepaitienė: The Nighttime Politics of History (An answer to A. Nikžentaitis)**

**Freedom fighters v. Wikipedia. Is it a tool to distort history?**

**Will we long hide our historical wounds in the name of glory?**

Ad removed. [Details](#)