

Lithuania pursues Jewish partisans

Extradition of 86-year-old Israeli demanded

By Frank Brendle, 03.09.2011

Lithuanian police demand that Israel surrender an 86-year-old man who fought as a partisan against the Nazis. The accusation: >>Libelling of National Heroes<<

(Translation from the original German <https://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/205916.litauen-verfolgt-juedische-partisanen.html> authorised by Rachel Croucher)

Joseph Melamed was informed of the Lithuanian extradition request on [30 August] by Israeli police. In a conversation with *Neues Deutschland* Melamed said the officers sympathetically advised him not to travel to Lithuania until further notice because he was under threat of immediate arrest.

Melamed is Chairman of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel. He is originally from Kaunas and escaped from being murdered in the 1940s by fleeing into the wild where he joined partisan groups. He went to Israel after the war and worked as a lawyer among other things, as well as publishing several books on Lithuanian Jewry.

The current Lithuanian allegations date back to a publication which appeared in 1999 in which Melamed named militiamen who, in 1941, are said to have taken part in the murder of Jews. He informed the Lithuanian authorities of these findings at the time. >>But they never responded because the perpetrators were still alive. Now when they are all dead, they come for me<< Melamed laments.

Five years ago the Lithuanian authorities first took action against former partisans - all of Jewish origin. The State Prosecutor was investigating inter alia the former Director of the Holocaust Memorial Yad Vashem, Yitzhak Arad, who as a 13-year-old had joined the partisans. He ought to provide information as to >>war crimes<< committed by partisan units. In the Lithuanian media, resistance fighters are depicted as murderers with the blood of Lithuanians dripping from their hands. People allegedly libelled by Melamed were members

of militias who, at the same time as the invasion by the Wehrmacht of the Soviet Union in June 1941, undertook an uprising against the Red Army. These militias are now officially seen in Lithuania as freedom fighters of the hour. Historical evidence which proves their involvement in anti-Semitic pogroms is ignored as much as reports of the significant readiness of the Lithuanian population to collaborate with the Nazi occupiers are also ignored.

On 3 September at 5 PM Dovid Katz, editor of DefendingHistory.com, and political scientist Gerd Wiegel will give a briefing on >>Relativisation of the Holocaust in Lithuania and Germany<< at the Place of Information (Holocaust Memorial) in Berlin. (<http://www.bildungswerk-friedensarbeit.org>).