

From: Stacye Mehard

Date: Fri, Sep 16, 2011 at 8:55 PM

Subject: Sceptical?

To: Jonathan Brent

As one (non-Jewish) person in our country who has followed events in Lithuania for the past 2 years from multiple sources I found it alarming that you would be so forward in stating so absolutely that this comment attributed to you was legitimate at this time:

“One of the most important statements in the article is that the swastika is banned by Lithuanian law, something that Katz and others have refused to acknowledge.”

I saw the comment on the website of Dovid Katz, however his site is only one source of information that I follow.

When I heard that you would be entertaining the Lithuanian Foreign Minister I remained non-judgmental on your reasons for doing such. I am no radical and was hoping that the *\*only\** reason that you would host the Lithuanian government at this time would be to utilize what I call the 'backdoor' to discussing the current and ongoing 'lack of support' provided to the Jewish Community of Lithuania by the Lithuanian government and the growing neo-Nazi movement in that country. After reading this remark reportedly made by you that doesn't seem so. Do you really feel educated on the issues as regards Lithuania??

Mr. Brent, I was at the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference in August 2011 and intentionally sat in the second row at the talk given by the Lithuanian Ambassador to the US so that I was sure to clearly hear every word he said. After his talk completed I was only one of at least 10 people (out of the perhaps 50 in the room) who stood up to question his government's sincerity around the various "Jewish" issues he brought up. Most persons who addressed these things with him spoke of their personal experience during visits to Lithuania, etc.

Though I am very hopeful about the passing of the Jewish "restitution" monies last spring, please do not try to tell me that the Lithuanian government, who

previously detained 2 of our elder Holocaust survivors in Vilna and has not made amends, and most recently has begun yet another "investigation" on a male holocaust survivor and who has never acted on moving forward to investigate and prosecute any former Lithuanian collaborators has any "Jewish" interests at heart. When the government makes a formal and "sincere public apology" to the 2 elder holocaust survivors previously detained, which might not even then equal the "publicness" of their "detention" I will then feel that change with this government has begun. This is the message that the Lithuanian people must hear ~ that their "government" is coming forth with a sign of a better psychological health. You do know I assume, that Lithuania is documented internationally as having the highest suicide rate in the world and has for at least 10 - 15 years. Certainly years of Soviet oppression is a factor, but Lithuanian collaboration is no less a factor in my humble opinion. I am a psychiatric nurse of 30 years duration and know the world of suicide quite well.

This is the real Lithuania, or at least "one of them" ~ check out the video:  
<http://www.twofourdigital.net/Insight/lithuania.wmv.aspx>.

Needless to say I am disappointed in the presence that YIVO has in this matter. As a concerned citizen it embarrassed me when i heard that YIVO would be entertaining the Lithuanian government to begin with, but as I previously stated, I withheld making assumptions as to your intent and how it would go. Reading this remark reportedly made by you has removed my confidence in your leadership in this matter. Prior to that I always felt a respect for YIVO and looked forward to researching there when I 'finally' get to New York. I fully realize that my opinions make little difference to \*you\*, however I appreciate the time you took to read this letter. Only time will tell us whether your type of 'support' or mine will truly make the difference.

Thank you,

Stacye Mehard

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(\*\* name of organization withheld at writer's request.)