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Post 4: THE BLATANT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHABAD LITHUANIA IN THE ALLOCATING OF RESTITUTION FUNDS #2

ט"ב

16 Cheshvan, 5777
November 17, 2016

If you are new to this blog, please begin by reading the earlier blog posts, especially the [2nd blog post \[http://rabbikrinsky.blogspot.it/2016/11/6-cheshvan-5777-november-7-2016-dear.html\]](http://rabbikrinsky.blogspot.it/2016/11/6-cheshvan-5777-november-7-2016-dear.html) .

A few important additional points that reflect the hypocritical attitude and actions of the co-chairs of the Good Will Foundation (further GWF) in their refusal to fairly fund Chabad Lithuania:

In February of this year I sent the following urgent request for emergency funding for our school to the co-chairs of the GWF:

Dear Andy and Faina,

Hope this note finds both of you well.

Per the attached letter, SODRA (the Lithuanian Social Security Tax Authority) is threatening to begin bankruptcy proceedings against our Menachemo Namu Gymnasium due to the debt of 74,405.87 EURO (which must be paid by the start of March 2016). There is also currently a debt of 26,836 Euro to Mokesciu Inspekcia (The tax Authority - for withholding taxes for workers salaries).

As the chairpeople of the "Foundation for Disposal of Good Will Compensation for the Immovable Property of Jewish **Religious** Communities" I **would like to ask for emergency, funding of 101,241.87 EURO** from the foundation to cover this pressing shortfall immediately to assure the successful continuation of this Gymnasium which is teaching **religious** Torah true Judaism in the spirit of Lithuania of yesteryear.

Looking forward to your timely, positive reply.

Thank you,

Here is a copy of the response we received from the director of the GWG:



[https://1.bp.blogspot.com/_X0HEWkOpQQ/WCXPJzRNIBI/AAAAAAAAACd4/YYuniD6eKI4YICCzhuojfuiT9EisZyecACLCB/s1600/Screenshot%2B%252889%2529.png]

Let's examine their response, point by point:

1. It is quite ridiculous to suggest that Chabad HQ or donors cover this debt when everyone knows that every Chabad Center and its activities are NOT funded by Chabad HQ or 'Chabad Donors'.

2. They claim that Lithuanian law and the GWF bylaws do not allow for them to pay for social security taxes:

a. Are they claiming that NONE of the funds that the GWF has allocated to the Lithuanian Jewish Community (further LJC) are used to pay social security taxes for workers salaries...nothing?

How about the actual staff of the GWF? From which funds are the social security taxes for their salaries paid from if not from GWF funds?

(GWF co-chair Andy Baker acknowledged that the administrative costs of the GWF per year is 144,000 Euro...but he has so far refused to share an accounting for that...seems they feel that they can claim whatever they'd like as they are NOT furnishing details of the LJC usage of these funds...).

Would like to suggest that there is actually a significant sum of GWF funds ultimately being used to pay for social security taxes!!!

And bylaws of an organization are a really flimsy excuse, as the same way they were drawn up in one manner, with true good will they can easily be changed...

3. The GWF co-chairs feign surprise to learn of our school's debt for Social Security taxes, after Andy Baker was told in June 2014 that our school does not have debts to that same department!

Well, from June 2014 until February, 2016 is more than a year and a half, and the monthly responsibility of the school to the Social Security department averages more than 7000 Euro monthly.

Have the co-chairs of the GWF EVER inquired as to the expenses of our institutions and activities? Do we have even a single, minority voice on the GWF board to even express our needs and concerns?

GWF...

4. The co-chairs of the GWF continue their letter by asking for an audit to assure "that no funds are diverted to pay for previous debt"!

But what if these debt are solely a result of:

The bias against Chabad Lithuania in the allocation of GWF funds?

In other words: Had the GWF provided fair and equitable funding to Chabad Lithuania for 2014-2016 **we would NOT have had ANY debts at the time of that request for emergency funding!**

Our debts are also in part due to the lowly efforts of the chairwoman of the LJC to sabotage relationships with our donors to harm our fundraising success...

A few salient points regarding the seemingly innocent request for an audit:

A. The GWF does NOT require an organization to be audited before granting funds this request was made to the best of our knowledge **ONLY** to Chabad Lithuania.

B. Why was Chabad Lithuania singled out?

GWF co-chair Andy Baker told me in the June 2014 meeting (referred to in the above response letter) that they are demanding an audit from us because 1. there was an article in a newspaper in Lithuania about our school's debts...and because 2. they cannot have GWF funds going for debts!

If you read my previous blog post below you may conclude as to why this article was written, and who "influenced" its being printed at that time...and for what purpose...

About Debts

Presenting a situation in the proper context is always **very** important, as it can drastically change one's view from one end of the spectrum to the other...

FACT: We began our kindergarten in 1995 and school in 1996 and the rest of our fruitful activities throughout this country NOT because of the availability of restitution funds, but solely because it is a vitally important need in the goal of restoring a semblance of the true legacy of Lithuanian Jewry.

This in a country in which most of the population is poor by Western standards, adding to the challenge of raising enough funds for a school, which is a costly, ongoing expense - often a challenge in much richer countries.

In light of the above, in this instance debts such as these are a sign of readiness to go out on a limb to work to recreate traditional Jewish life, without a financial safety net.

The above deserves the respect and admiration of the Jewish world, instead we have received derision from the co-chairs of the GWF.

They have turned a positive quality into a negative one as a convenient excuse for their goal of not sharing fairly ANY of the GWF funds.

C. We actually tried to comply with the request to have an audit done, hired a reputable, internationally recognized audit company, and paid an advance.

Then the usual ensued.

The school was being audited for 2013, the audit company began asking for paperwork for 2014. They shlepped out the process and in the end left it incomplete, unfinished...

With our experience of the LJC leadership's underhanded machinations, we were honestly NOT surprised by the results...

D. Ironic that the GWF singled Chabad Lithuania out for an audit but is still refusing to furnish simple numbers requested about the GWF allocations to the LJC, especially for individual scholarships...

In summary: *The GWF did NOT actually want an audit done...they wanted an excuse not to fund us...*

5. The letter concludes: ...we stand ready to consider any proposal that fits within the

guidelines of the Good Will Foundation.

There is much to be said about this 'readiness':

A. Andrew Baker admits in our recent email correspondence that the GWF grants most of the funds received from the Lithuanian government (without asking for applications of any sort) yearly to the Lithuanian Jewish Community...but has no role in determining how this money is spent!

Chabad Lithuania is the LONE organization here that has been doing the vast majority of religious work for more than two decades COUNTRYWIDE, with a budget in the many hundreds of thousands of Euros annually...

And yet we are treated as some 'newcomers' forced to break up our extensive and multifaceted activities and institution (such as a nursery/kindergarten and 12 grade day school) into applications of only 30,000 each!

A few concrete examples that highlight the absurdity here:

The LJC has a building which they use as their center...it's utilities, upkeep etc. are paid in full by the GWF;

While:

Chabad has a building which houses our educational institutions and acts as a nerve center for all our activities...BUT Chabad gets NOTHING from the GWF for the utilities and upkeep of said building!

Another Example:

Chabad here works tirelessly SINCE 1994 in five cities with community wide holiday programs such as:

Pesach 2016:

<http://jewishlita.com/pesach-2016/>

Purim/Lag BaOmer:

<http://jewishlita.com/activities/holidays/purim-2016/>

[\[http://jewishlita.com/activities/holidays/purim-2016/\]](http://jewishlita.com/activities/holidays/purim-2016/)

This past Chanukah:

<http://jewishlita.com/chanukah-2015/>

WHY AREN'T THESE ACTIVITIES WORTHY OF GWF FUNDING?

B. Trust and respect is blindly granted to an organization (the LJC) whose leadership has for decades been subversively attacking and sabotaging the work of Chabad Lithuania, in the attempt to totally eradicate our efforts so that we have nothing for which to request funds for from the GWF!

family member of a former critic of theirs...to buy their silence...but they are continuing to refuse to release this information...

E. The GWF decided to defer about half of the funds - millions of Euro over the past three years - received from the Lithuanian Government for usage years from now (for after the Lithuanian government completes the payments for the restitution).

This decision of course was taken without considering the needs of Chabad Lithuania, as we are not on the board and never had a chance to weigh in on this question.

In other words, the GWF is sitting on millions of Euro while the singular educational institution reviving traditional Jewish religious study in Lithuania for more than 20 years is callously denied vital emergency funding needed to assure its future!

It is high time that Chabad Lithuania received its due from the GWF funds, instead of degrading excuses.

Posted 17th November 2016 by Rabbi Sholom Ber Krinsky

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