

From: Andrew Baker
Date: 14 Aug. 2020, 17:43
Subject: RE: Letter from Vilnius Jewish Community board members
To: Arkady Kurliandchik
Cc: Faina (fainakukliansky@gmail.com)

Dear Mr. Kurliandchik, et al,

I had debated whether even to reply to your sad, shameful, and libelous email. Certainly, if it had been written on paper and delivered through the postal service, I would have washed my hands thoroughly after reading it.

Your attacks on Faina Kukliansky for squandering “millions of Euros” are baseless. You have challenged her election as Chairwoman of the Lithuanian Jewish Community in the Lithuanian courts, and they have ruled against you.

You attack me and my fellow international board members of the Good Will Foundation for “supreme shamelessness” in the distribution of funds, “deriving from the value of the religious properties of the annihilated Jews of Lithuania.” How dare you?

Please, I do not need any lecture from you on the source of these funds. I spent over ten years of my life negotiating with three separate Lithuanian Governments—together with Simonas Alperovitch and Faina Kukliansky—for these compensation payments. I have made numerous trips to Vilnius for those negotiations and for other reasons over the years. I would hardly call them “junkets” and few of them were “enjoyable.”

Since it was established, the GWF has been subject to both annual Government audits and audits carried out by private accounting firms. The programs and activities that receive funding from the GWF are identified on its website for all to see.

You are correct that the GWF had promised support for the Vilnius Jewish Community. However, you must first present us with a description of the projects you wish to organize and follow the rules for all grant applicants. This you have failed to do. That is your choice, but you have only yourselves to blame for it.

As you also bring up the case of Snipiskes Cemetery as another means to attack the LJC, I will reply briefly to that, as well. Because of the concerns that emerged already fifteen years ago with private development plans in and around the cemetery, we helped facilitate a visit from Rabbi Eliyakim Schlesinger and his rabbinic colleagues from the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe (CPJCE), the foremost halachic authority on cemeteries in Europe and perhaps the world. Eventually, the CPJCE entered into a formal agreement with the Government to provide oversight for any activity at Snipiskes as well as at other sites in Lithuania. That agreement is still in force, and the CPJCE regularly visits Vilnius. Your own Vilnius Jewish Community President, Simonas Gurevicius, was there at the time of Rabbi Schlesinger’s visit and the signing of this agreement, and he was an enthusiastic supporter of it. Perhaps you would be better served by discussing this matter and your complaints with him.

Andrew Baker