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<http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/svastikos-vasario-16-osios-eisenoje-sukele-arsia-diskusija-263728>

SWASTIKAS AT FEBRUARY 16 PARADE LEAD TO FIERCE DEBATE

Youths carrying signs with historical images of swastikas who tried to join the February 16 Lithuanian Independence Day parade in Klaipėda have received a summons to appear in court in early March. Four administrative cases will be heard at the Klaipėda District Area Court.

The court will decide whether to punish them for the dissemination and demonstration of Nazi symbols.

One of the four youths taken to the Klaipėda City Police Commissariat on Tuesday was Linas Zeniauskis, a direct descendant of the Simonas Daukantas family. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simonas_Daukantas] Simonas Daukantas was his great-grandmother's brother.

Having delved deeply into the works of his famous great-grandfather, Linas Zeniauskis became convinced that the symbols of the state propagated today – the Vytis horse and rider and the cross – are just Christian symbols and do not represent the Lithuanian spiritual heritage, and that much blood has been shed because of them.

“Our true symbol is the swastika. This is the symbol of the sun and of creation. The swastika has an ethnological character. The incident of February 16th and the article in the daily newspaper *Klaipėda* have shown that these signs gave rise to large public debate. Scholars who studied history during the Soviet years know more about the history of the Party than the historic past of their own homeland,” L. Zeniauskis said.

Historian and doctor of humanities Vacys Vaivada said that rings with swastikas have been found. He said they are not unique. He said it was

important to note the swastika was used less by the Baltic tribes and was much more popular with Slavs, from Kiev up to the eastern boundaries of territories where they lived. The swastika is most often found in women's graves, he said. This has received a lot of attention in current research as well as in the work of the late Norbertas Vėlius.

“If you are interested in swastikas as archaeological objects, then you should by no means identify these symbols with the Baltic heritage. If you view it from today's perspective, the application of these symbols in the present seems too drastic, because of the history of the 20th century. If facts of one period of history are taken and applied in the space and context of another epoch, this can cause not only public misunderstandings, but also resistance. Such demonstrations may be received not in the way that a historical fact should be, V. Vaivada cautioned. “One cannot take a fact from times long past and insert it into the current context, where it appears completely different. In this event, the fact is not understood in the same way as in former times. In this event, there is the possibility that research on the ancient heritage of these things might be halted altogether, because of the intrusion of current attitudes and because the [historical] matter at hand is used carelessly. Such behaviour is either negligence or misuse.”