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<http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2010-07-14-tomas-venclova-as-dustu/47325>

Tomas Venclova, „Aš dūstu“ [‘I am Choking’]

BRIEF EXCERPT ONLY:

There is no progress apparent in Lithuanian-Jewish relations. Anger against Efraim Zuroff and attempts to lay the foundations for the “Double Genocide” theory continue, accompanied by the demand: “Don't you dare call us a nation of Jew-shooters.” Obviously, Lithuanians are not a nation of Jew-shooters. But, unfortunately, actions in the recent past do provide a basis for calling Lithuanians a nation of lawyers for Jew-shooters. Whatever you might think about Efraim Zuroff, he is right when he says that Lithuanians, unlike Croats, have not punished a single murderer of Jews. On the contrary, although this hasn't been articulated by society or the courts, there is clearly a sentiment that the right thing to do is to silently sabotage all such cases. We are not mature enough to understand: it is not permissible to justify or support a criminal merely because he is an ethnic Lithuanian (who considers himself a patriot), when his his victims or accusers are not Lithuanians.

I have said and will say that two large mistakes were made in this area which will have to be corrected sooner or later. The first mistake concerns the Provisional Government of 1941. It needs to be said without any qualifiers that the new Lithuania categorically rejects including this episode among its list of laudable and honored traditions. The Provisional Government wasn't essentially

different from the Tiso regime in Slovakia or the Pavelic government in Croatia, neither of which any serious historian would consider a positive thing. We call members [of the Lithuanian Provisional Government] patriots—subjectively they were—but we cannot honor patriots who cause such great damage to their country that even up till now we are powerless to clean up the mess. They damaged Lithuania's reputation more than any other enemy of Lithuania.

If an “alternative history” thought-experiment is allowable, let's imagine the Western allies had liberated Lithuania in 1944 and Stazys Lozoraitis, then the nominal head of state, had returned. Without a doubt, there would then have to be (however reluctantly) a tribunal to try the Provisional Government just as the Pétaine process took place in France. Pétaine was also a patriot who had achieved merit for France on the battle field, and he wanted to preserve France's independence, even at the cost of union with Hitler. Some of the members of the Provisional Government might have been acquitted, but certainly not one of them would have received a state medal and not one of them would have been called Patriarch of the Nation. [...]