

The Guarantor That Would Not Decide

Lithuania's Jewish promises from Geneva to IHRA

By Eugene J. Levin

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A note on the research behind this article

There should be no mystery about why this article intersects with the recent work of Grant Arthur Gochin.

Grant and I have been collaborating.

For years, Grant has assembled Lithuanian archival records, court filings, government correspondence and institutional responses concerning Lithuania's treatment of its Jewish history. During the past several months, he has shared with me a substantial body of League of Nations material: archival scans, translations, document inventories, parliamentary records, working chronologies and his developing analysis of Lithuania's interwar commitments to its Jewish citizens.

We have spent long sessions poring over this material together. We have compared translations with the surviving documents, tested formulations against the archive, argued about what particular records prove, and separated allegations made by contemporary Jewish representatives from findings actually reached by international institutions.

Some of the underlying discoveries appear in Grant's companion archival investigation, There Are No Places. Other parts extend the institutional record available through Grant's research archive and developed in articles including Membership by Violation, How Lithuania Discredited Its Witness and IHRA Was Warned in 2019. Lithuania Did Not Cure.

The overlap is intentional and disclosed.

The documentary record is one we have examined together. The argument I draw from it here is my own.

I approach it as a documentary filmmaker who has spent years examining the Baltic Holocaust, as the director of *Baltic Truth*, and as a former Soviet citizen who recognizes the architecture of official truth.

A state does not have to announce that it has created an official narrative. It only has to establish the institution that certifies the narrative, protect that institution from meaningful review, and treat those who challenge it as the problem.

The League of Nations archive shows an earlier version of the same institutional danger.

It shows what happens when a state makes expansive commitments concerning Jews, when Jews document the narrowing of those commitments, and when the international institution receiving the evidence cannot bring itself to decide what the evidence means.

The distinction that must be made first

The League of Nations minority-protection system and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance are not legally identical.

Lithuania's admission to the League in 1921 was not the same transaction as its later membership in IHRA. The League possessed a Council, a Secretariat and a formal minority-petition procedure.

IHRA is an intergovernmental organization operating through governmental delegations, expert groups and consensus. It is not a court. It does not conduct criminal trials or issue judgments enforceable against its Member Countries.

That distinction is not a weakness in this article. It is the premise of it.

I do not argue that IHRA inherited the League's jurisdiction. I do not argue that IHRA can impose a remedy that its rules do not provide. I use the word *guarantor* in an institutional rather than a treaty sense.

The comparison is narrower.

What does an international body do after a state receives standing or legitimacy through commitments concerning Jews, and that body later receives a detailed record showing that those commitments have not been performed?

Does it examine the record and reach a conclusion?

Or does it receive, circulate and preserve the evidence while avoiding the decision for which the evidence was submitted?

Lithuania and its Jews have been through that procedure before.

The documents remain in Geneva.

So does the unanswered question.

The voluntary promise

On August 5, 1919, while Lithuania was seeking international recognition, its delegation at the Paris Peace Conference delivered an eight-point undertaking to the Committee of Jewish Delegations.

Lithuania recognized the “members of the Jewish nation.” It promised political equality, participation in government and the administration of justice, proportional representation, language and religious rights, Jewish schools, elected communal bodies, proportional public subsidies and a Ministry for Jewish Affairs.

The undertaking stated that these principles formed, or would form, part of Lithuania's fundamental laws.

Its closing formulation was politically important. Lithuania asked that the rights be understood as accepted voluntarily rather than imposed by constraint.¹

Lithuania was not merely agreeing to tolerate its Jewish population. It was presenting Jewish rights as evidence of the character of the state for which it sought recognition.

The promises were repeatedly reaffirmed.

That reaffirmation was not rhetorical. Motzkin’s December 1921 memorial recorded that, in the autumn of 1920, the Lithuanian government gave the Committee of Jewish Delegations a written assurance that the 1919 declaration would be inserted into the Constitution. The assurance was delivered to the president of the Jewish National Council, repeated orally, and supported by a letter

¹ League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1653/41/18339/9556, Minority Questions — Protection des Minorités en Lithuanie (1922), Motzkin memorandum and attached Lithuanian declaration of 5 August 1919, PDF pp. 4–8 (duplicate set pp. 11–17), <https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-18339.pdf>. The declaration recognizes members of the “Jewish nation,” sets out the eight undertakings summarized in the text and asks that the rights be treated as voluntarily accepted rather than imposed by constraint.

signed by leaders of the political groups in the Lithuanian parliament. On December 17, 1921, the government again declared before the Constituent Assembly that it would respect Jewish language, culture and religion and subsidize the autonomous institutions of the Jewish minority.²

On December 14, 1920, Augustinas Voldemaras wrote to the League on behalf of the Lithuanian delegation. His memorandum was circulated as Council Document P.4.

Voldemaras represented that complete equality before the law had already been guaranteed and carried out in practice from the first days of the reconstituted state. He said Jews participated freely in the Seimas, the army and state institutions. He said Jewish schools operated under the same conditions as Lithuanian schools. He said the Ministry for Jewish Affairs was working “with energy and success.”³

This was Lithuania's account of itself.

It was not an independent finding by the League.

That is precisely why the document matters. Before Jewish representatives began supplying evidence of retrenchment, the Lithuanian state had already placed its own standard before the international community.

The name of the man who certified that equality acquires a darker meaning in the later record.

Voldemaras became the leader of an increasingly fascist political current and founded *Geležinis Vilkas* — the Iron Wolf — a paramilitary organization modeled on the authoritarian movements then growing elsewhere in Europe. Its conception of the nation's enemies included Jews. After President Antanas Smetona removed Voldemaras from office, the radical network organized around his name endured as the Voldemarininkai, or Voldemarists, with adherents inside the nationalist movement and the Lithuanian officer corps.⁴

By 1939, representatives of that movement were seeking money and weapons from Nazi Germany. The German documentary record states that the first proposed use of the requested funds was the organization of pogroms against Lithuania's Jews.⁵

² League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1653/41/18339/9556, Minority Questions — Protection des Minorités en Lithuanie (1922), Leo Motzkin memorandum of 30 December 1921, PDF pp. 4–5 and duplicate pp. 11–13, <https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-18339.pdf>. Motzkin records the autumn 1920 written assurance that the 5 August 1919 undertaking would be inserted into the Constitution, support from leaders of the parliamentary political groups, and the government's declaration before the Constituent Assembly on 17 December 1921.

³ Council Document P.4, Lithuania: Protection of Minorities, 14 December 1920, memorandum by Augustinas Voldemaras, reproduced in C_1920-1921_P4_BI.pdf, https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/C_1920-1921_P4_BI.pdf. Voldemaras described equality as already guaranteed and realized in practice and said the Ministry for Jewish Affairs worked “with energy and success.”

⁴ Christoph Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011), discussion of the Iron Wolf and the Voldemarists; Christoph Dieckmann and Rūta Vanagaitė, *How Did It Happen? Understanding the Holocaust* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021), chap. 6, “Small and Radical,” pp. 147–151; Alfonsas Eidintas, *Antanas Smetona and His Lithuania: From the National Liberation Movement to an Authoritarian Regime (1893–1940)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), chap. 12.

⁵ Reinhard Heydrich to Joachim von Ribbentrop, 29 June 1939, PS-2953; German Foreign Office memorandum, 19 July 1939, PS-2952; International Military Tribunal, *Trial of the Major War Criminals*, vol. XXXI, pp. 385–391. The file records the Voldemarist request for 100,000 litai and

The institutional continuity became lethal in 1941. Voldemarist cadres helped capture key Lithuanian police, military, security, prison and battalion commands. Those offices supplied personnel, records, detention facilities, transport, weapons and administrative reach to the persecution and mass murder of Jews.⁶

The boundary must be stated precisely. Voldemaras himself did not personally direct the killings of 1941. Soviet authorities arrested him after his return to Lithuania in June 1940. He was in Soviet hands from that arrest until his death on December 16, 1942. His responsibility in this history is organizational and ideological: he founded the movement, gave it its identity and left behind a radical political network whose antisemitic program and personnel later entered Lithuania's machinery of slaughter.⁷

Grant documented that progression — from the prewar solicitation of pogrom money to the wartime capture of Lithuania's coercive apparatus — in The Coup That Captured Lithuania's Killing Apparatus.

The contrast is no longer merely ironic.

In 1920, Voldemaras assured the League that Jewish equality had been implemented from the first days of the state.

The movement that bore his name later sought foreign support to attack those same Jews and helped occupy the institutions through which they were gathered for murder.

Recognition before performance

The decisive transaction followed in September 1921.

The original letter has not yet been located. The contents must therefore be stated through the surviving report of Gastão da Cunha, the Brazilian representative who served as rapporteur on minority protection in Lithuania.⁸

weapons, principally for organizing pogroms against Jews, and the subsequent authorization of regular subsidies.

⁶ Michael MacQueen, "The Context of Mass Destruction: Agents and Prerequisites of the Holocaust in Lithuania," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12, no. 1 (1998): 27–48, especially the section "Revenge of the Iron Wolf"; Christoph Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944*, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011); Saulius Sužiedėlis, *Crisis, War, and the Holocaust in Lithuania* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2024), published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁷ Alfonsas Eidintas, Antanas Smetona and His Lithuania: From the National Liberation Movement to an Authoritarian Regime (1893–1940) (Leiden: Brill, 2015), chap. 12, on Voldemaras's June 1940 return to Lithuania and arrest; Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija, "Augustinas Voldemaras," <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/augustinas-voldemaras/>. The encyclopedia records his death in Soviet custody on 16 December 1942. He was in Soviet hands throughout the 1941 killing period. The text therefore distinguishes his ideological and organizational responsibility from personal direction of the killings.

⁸ The original letter of 14 September 1921 has not been located. Its contents are known through Gastão da Cunha's report, Council document C.36.1922.I, preserved in League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1653/41/18454/9556, Minority Questions — Protection des Minorités en Lithuanie (1922), <https://static-cdn.toi-media.com/blogs/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-18454.pdf>. Only da Cunha's characterization is relied upon here.

According to da Cunha's report, on September 14, 1921 — before Lithuania's admission to the League — the president of the Lithuanian delegation informed the Secretary-General that Lithuania was prepared to adhere to the Assembly's recommendation on minority protection.

Lithuania was also prepared to enter negotiations with the Council to define the scope and execution of its international obligations toward minorities.

Admission followed within days.

Da Cunha later proposed that Lithuania's obligations be defined in a declaration to the Council and that the provisions might be placed under the League's guarantee in a form comparable to the minority treaties.⁹

The Assembly recommendation, Lithuania's undertaking, the contemplated declaration and any final international obligations must not be collapsed into a single legal instrument.

But the sequence is clear.

Lithuania accepted the principle of an international minority obligation before admission.

The details of performance were to be negotiated afterward.

Recognition came first.

The formal instrument came later.

When the Council returned to the matter in January 1922, Lithuania's representative, Tomas Naruševičius, declared that his government had already given the minorities “all the desired guarantees.” He said he was ready to submit the documents proving it.

The Council deferred the matter to its next session and invited Lithuania to provide its legislation and detailed information concerning minorities, “insofar as this has not already taken place.”¹⁰

The offer of proof is preserved.

The declaration is preserved. So is the later record against which it must be read.

The declaration that closed the loop

On May 12, 1922, Lithuania made its Declaration concerning the Protection of Minorities before the Council of the League of Nations. It was published in the *League of Nations Treaty Series*, volume 22, beginning at page 393. On December 11, 1923, the Council formally accorded the League's guarantee to the Declaration.¹¹

⁹ Gastão da Cunha, report C.36.1922.I, preserved in League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1653/41/18454/9556, *Minority Questions — Protection des Minorités en Lithuanie* (1922), <https://static-cdn.toi-media.com/blogs/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-18454.pdf>. Da Cunha recounted the pre-admission communication and proposed defining Lithuania's obligations in a declaration to the Council, potentially under the League's guarantee in a form comparable to the minority treaties.

¹⁰ League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1653/41/18454/9556, *Minority Questions — Protection des Minorités en Lithuanie* (1922), Council proceedings and report, 11–14 January 1922, <https://static-cdn.toi-media.com/blogs/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-18454.pdf>. Tomas Naruševičius said Lithuania had given minorities “all the desired guarantees” and was ready to submit the documents; the Council invited Lithuania to provide its legislation and detailed information “insofar as this has not already taken place.”

¹¹ Declaration concerning the Protection of Minorities in Lithuania, Geneva, 12 May 1922, *League of Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 22, p. 393 et seq., art. 1 and art. 4 §§3–4,

Article 1 did not describe the protections as aspirations. It recognized the stipulations as fundamental laws of Lithuania and declared that no law, regulation or official action could conflict or interfere with them, and that no present or future measure could prevail over them.

Article 4 addressed language directly. It prohibited restrictions on the free use by any Lithuanian national of any language in private intercourse, commerce, religion, the press, publications or public meetings, and required adequate facilities for non-Lithuanian-speaking nationals to use their language, orally or in writing, before the courts.

That instrument changes the nature of the later record. Lithuania did not merely promise minority protection and then neglect to formalize it. It formalized the obligation and elevated it above ordinary legislation.

The electoral interpretation of 1922, the parliamentary exclusion formula of 1924 and the dismantling of Jewish communal autonomy therefore cannot be dismissed as disappointments of an informal pledge. They were official actions to be measured against a declaration stating that official action could not prevail over minority rights.

The point is not that Lithuania failed to sign or that the League failed to accept the guarantor's role. Lithuania signed, and the Council accorded the guarantee. The point is that the existence of the instrument made the later international non-decision more serious.

The Jewish record arrived

The Jewish representatives did not wait for later historians to reconstruct what had happened. They documented the problem while the institutions still existed, while the statutes could still be read and while the officials responsible could still be asked to answer.

Even before Lithuania entered the League, the European editor of the *Forward* had sent three questions to League officials.

To what extent would the League protect Jewish civil and national rights?

Would it take measures to stop pogroms?

How did it intend to address the condition of European Jewry?

The repeated telegram expressly named Lithuania.

The League answered by reciting minority provisions in treaties concerning other states. Those treaties did not cover Lithuania. The questions concerning action against pogroms and the condition of European Jewry were not answered.

The correspondence was then closed as repetitive.¹²

<https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%2022/v22.pdf>. Article 1 recognized the Declaration's stipulations as fundamental laws of Lithuania and provided that no law, regulation or official action could conflict or interfere with them, nor could any present or future law, regulation or official action prevail over them. Article 4 prohibited restrictions on the free use of language in private intercourse, commerce, religion, the press, publications and public meetings, and required adequate facilities for non-Lithuanian-speaking nationals to use their language before the courts. On 11 December 1923, the League Council formally accorded the League's guarantee to the Declaration; League of Nations, Official Journal, 1924, p. 333; United States Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Minorities,"

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1919Parisv13/ch10subsubch1>.

¹² League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1620/41/8545/1249, Minority Questions — correspondence with the European editor of the *Forward* (1920),

On December 30, 1921, Leo Motzkin of the Committee of Jewish Delegations submitted Lithuania's own undertakings to the League. He listed the political, educational, linguistic, religious and autonomous rights Lithuania had promised. He also warned of agitation in Lithuanian antisemitic circles.¹³

The record then moved from promise to performance.

A dispute concerning Lithuania's 1922 electoral system produced legal opinions from three eminent European jurists. They concluded that the electoral authorities had interpreted proportional representation in a manner unsupported by the statute and prejudicial to smaller electoral lists.

One of the opinions described the result as the “crushing of minorities.”¹⁴

In December 1924, the governing majority in the Lithuanian Seimas adopted a formula for allocating parliamentary commissions that contained the words *išskiriant mažumas*.

Excluding the minorities.

The Jewish faction nominated its deputies to the commissions responsible for education, foreign affairs, national defense, finance, justice, labor, administration, petitions and other areas of government.

The exclusion operated in more than one way. The stenographic record repeatedly gives the administrative answer *viety nėra* — there are no places. In at least one case, Robinson's nomination to the Economic Commission, the majority forced a recorded division: sixteen voted in favor and twenty-two against. The Jewish faction then declared the underlying decision unconstitutional and recalled its remaining representative from that commission.¹⁵

One of the men denied a place was Jacob Robinson, chairman of the Jewish faction and leader of the Minorities Bloc.

Robinson would later establish the Institute of Jewish Affairs and help produce some of the earliest systematic documentation of the destruction of European Jewry. He advised the American prosecution at Nuremberg. He participated in the development of the postwar human-rights system. In 1961, he assisted Gideon Hausner at the trial of Adolf Eichmann.¹⁶

Lithuania's parliament could not find a place for him.

<https://static-cdn.toi-media.com/blogs/uploads/2026/08/R1620-41-1249-8545.pdf>. The telegrams asked about protection of Jewish civil and national rights, measures against pogroms and the condition of European Jewry. The Secretariat replied by citing minority provisions applicable to other states and did not answer the latter two questions.

¹³ League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1653/41/18339/9556, Minority Questions — Protection des Minorités en Lithuanie (1922), Leo Motzkin memorandum of 30 December 1921, with the 1919 undertaking and a warning concerning agitation in Lithuanian antisemitic circles, <https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-18339.pdf>.

¹⁴ League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1653/41/25163/9556, Minority Questions — Lithuania (1922), legal opinions concerning the electoral interpretation, <https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-25163.pdf>. One opinion described the result as *écrasement des minorités*, “the crushing of minorities.”

¹⁵ League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1654/41/46071/9556, Minority Questions — Lithuania (1924–1925), Seimas stenographic material of 19 December 1924, <https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/R1654-41-9556-46071.pdf>. The record includes *išskiriant mažumas* (“excluding the minorities”), repeated *viety nėra* (“there are no places”) responses, the recorded division on Jacob Robinson's nomination to the Economic Commission (16 in favor, 22 against), the Jewish faction's constitutional objection and its recall of Roginskis from that commission.

History did.

My purpose here is not to reproduce Grant's full archival reconstruction. His There Are No Places follows the parliamentary arithmetic, the destruction of Jewish autonomy, the treatment of Jewish farmers, the international filings and the League's procedural response in documentary detail.

My question is what happened when that record reached the institution that was supposed to protect the commitment.

When an accusation became “information”

On June 23, 1925, the Jewish, Polish and German factions of the Lithuanian parliament jointly challenged eleven statements made by Lithuania's representative, Dovas Zaunius, before the League Council on June 11.

The parliamentarians said the international account did not correspond to the domestic record.

They addressed the exclusion of minorities from parliamentary commissions, the dismantling of Jewish communal autonomy, minority schools and languages, proceedings involving petitioners, and the administration of agrarian reform.

Zévi Aberson, representing the Committee of Jewish Delegations in Geneva, transmitted the interpellation to the League.

It was received.

It was registered.

It circulated through the offices responsible for political and minority affairs.

An internal minute then concluded that the document could not be raised in connection with the pending petition. A copy would instead be sent *à titre d'information* — for information — to Lithuania's representative.¹⁷

Consider what had happened.

Members of Lithuania's own parliament formally charged that the account given by Lithuania's representative before an international body contained eleven statements that did not correspond to reality.

The League did not determine whether any of the eleven statements were accurate.

It did not ask the parliamentarians to prove them.

¹⁶ Jacob Robinson Institute for the History of Individual and Collective Rights, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, “About the Institute,” <https://robinson.huji.ac.il/AboutTheInstitute>. Robinson founded the Institute of Jewish Affairs, advised the chief United States prosecutor at Nuremberg, participated in the postwar human-rights architecture, and served as special adviser to Israel's Attorney General at the Eichmann trial.

¹⁷ League of Nations, Official Journal VI, no. 7 (1925), p. 864, declaration of the Lithuanian representative Zaunius at the Council sitting of 11 June 1925; League of Nations Archives, Geneva, 41/45350/9556, Minority Questions — Lithuania (1925), R-volume unresolved; public scan filename R1653-41-9556-45350.pdf, <https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-45350.pdf>. The file contains the 23 June 1925 joint Jewish, Polish and German interpellation, the charge that eleven statements did not correspond to reality, and the Secretariat's decision to send the document *à titre d'information* to Lithuania's representative. The archival R-volume remains deliberately unresolved notwithstanding the public filename.

It did not ask Lithuania to answer them in an adversarial process.

It reclassified the accusation as information and forwarded it to the official whose account it challenged.

Nothing was disproved.

Nothing was decided.

The complaint had entered an international procedure and emerged as correspondence.

The second filing

Aberson did not stop.

In September 1925, he wrote directly to the Secretary-General. He supplied a French translation of the Lithuanian parliamentary transcript, the Lithuanian original, and a table showing the numerical strength of every parliamentary faction and its representation on every commission.

He also supplied detailed cases concerning the treatment of Jewish farmers and institutions under agrarian reform.

Some of this material was circulated to Council members. Lithuania subsequently submitted observations.

But the Council's report had already been adopted.

The surviving dossier available for this article records no reconsideration of the September decision in light of the later evidence. That statement is limited to the dossier examined here; it does not claim that every item in the League's later published record has been exhausted.¹⁸

On September 5, 1925, the Council declared that it relied on the prudence of the Lithuanian government. It expressed the hope that Lithuania would dispel the apprehensions of its minorities and convince them that it was resolved to apply its minority declaration.¹⁹

That was the result.

Reliance on prudence.

An expression of hope.

No factual finding.

No independent supervision.

No timetable.

¹⁸ League of Nations Archives, Geneva, R1654/41/46071/9556 and 41/45350/9556 (R-volume unresolved), Minority Questions — Lithuania (1925), materials submitted by Zévi Aberson in September 1925, including the French translation, Lithuanian original, parliamentary-commission table and agrarian cases, <https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/R1654-41-9556-46071.pdf> and <https://grantgochin.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/R1653-41-9556-45350.pdf>. The agrarian matters are treated here as detailed contemporary Jewish parliamentary allegations unless independently corroborated.

¹⁹ League of Nations Council report on minorities in Lithuania, 5 September 1925, as recorded in the surviving Lithuanian-minorities dossier; see Council documents C.492.1925.I and C.517.1925.I. The complete published Council documents remain retrieval targets. The article therefore relies on wording preserved in the surviving dossier and does not claim that every later item in the League's published record has been exhausted. The "minority declaration" invoked in the report is Lithuania's Declaration of 12 May 1922.

No identified consequence if the promise was not performed.

Prudence was not a decision.

Hope was not enforcement.

The procedure was the result

The Lithuanian record might be dismissed as one country's procedural misfortune were it not for Herbert von Truhart's 1931 register of minority petitions submitted to the League.

Truhart tried to record what had happened to every minority petition during the League's first eleven years: who filed, against which state, on what subject, whether the petition was found receivable, whether the state answered, whether a Committee of Three considered it, and whether the Council reached a decision.

Across the entire register, Truhart recorded 525 petitions involving nineteen minority populations and thirteen states. Thirty-four petitions concerned Lithuania as the state complained against. Thirty-three petitions across all states were Jewish. Four fell into both categories: Jewish petitions concerning Lithuania.²⁰

The fate of the Lithuanian Jewish submissions is revealing.

Motzkin's 1921 memorial was mentioned in a rapporteur's report and then disappeared from the recorded procedure.

Another Jewish petition was absorbed into a Polish proceeding.

Aberson's September 1925 submission was circulated and received an answer from Lithuania, but the answer was incorporated into the broader Polish file rather than addressed directly to the Jewish petitioners.

Against the entry concerning the parliamentary interpellation — the document accusing Lithuania's representative of statements that did not correspond to reality — Truhart printed a question mark.

He could not establish that anything had happened to it.

This was not simply an administrative accident. It was part of the structure.

A submission could be removed from the minority procedure without a public determination. Petitioners were not ordinarily told whether their filings had been ruled receivable. A government could answer without the petitioner being officially informed of its answer. The published statistics were reduced to numbers that concealed the identities and subjects of the complaints that had disappeared.²¹

The system was capable of receiving evidence.

It was capable of routing evidence.

It was capable of preserving evidence.

²⁰ Herbert von Truhart, *Völkerbund und Minderheitenpetitionen* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1931), 181 pp. The register records 525 petitions involving nineteen minority populations in thirteen states. Thirty-four petitions concerned Lithuania as the state complained against; thirty-three petitions across all states were Jewish; four fell into both categories.

²¹ *Ibid.*, entries concerning Lithuanian Jewish petitions. The Motzkin memorial appears in a rapporteur's report and then leaves the recorded procedure; another Jewish submission is absorbed into a Polish proceeding; Aberson's later submission receives a Lithuanian answer through the broader Polish file; and the parliamentary interpellation entry carries a question mark.

What it could not reliably do was decide what the evidence established.

Why this matters to my work

This is where the research published through Grant's Substack and my own work converge without becoming identical.

Grant has documented the procedural architecture by which Lithuania's state historical claims have survived notice, complaint and contradiction. His Procedural Dismissal Catalogue and Selective Enforcement Index examine how modern Lithuanian institutions classify and contain challenges to the state narrative.

I have approached the same architecture through a different institutional question.

In The Witness IHRA Already Warned About, I asked what happens when the Lithuanian Genocide and Resistance Research Centre enters the prosecution of Artur Fridman as an explicit or functional historical witness after IHRA's own experts publicly impeached its method.

In Lithuania Confessed from the Floor of Parliament, I examined the Lithuanian parliamentary record acknowledging that litigation involving the state historical institution was being treated as a defense of national honor.

In How Lithuania Converts Holocaust Evidence into State Innocence, I examined the method by which evidence of individual conduct is acknowledged in categories but neutralized in the national conclusion.

Grant has separately examined the criminalization of historical speech in Before Lithuania Prosecuted Fridman, It Warned Me and the due-diligence failure surrounding Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas in Where Was Vanagas in 1941?

The League documents add the earlier institutional chapter.

The process did not begin with the current litigation. It did not begin with LGGRTC. It did not begin with the prosecution of Fridman.

Long before the Holocaust, Jewish representatives had learned that an institution might accept every page they submitted while withholding the one thing the submission was meant to obtain:

A conclusion.

The comparison with IHRA

IHRA is not the League of Nations.

But IHRA membership is not empty of content.

IHRA's Member Countries commit themselves to the Stockholm Declaration and the 2020 IHRA Ministerial Declaration. Those commitments include Holocaust education, remembrance and research; countering Holocaust denial and distortion; safeguarding the historical record; and addressing national pasts openly and accurately.²²

Lithuania is an IHRA Member Country.²³

²² International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, "Stockholm Declaration" (2000), <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/stockholm-declaration>; IHRA, "2020 Ministerial Declaration," <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/2020-ihra-ministerial-declaration>.

²³ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, "Lithuania," Member Country profile, <https://holocaustremembrance.com/countries/lithuania>.

The institutional transaction is therefore different in law but recognizable in form.

Lithuania possesses the international credential of membership in an organization devoted to Holocaust truth. That credential rests upon commitments concerning Jewish history and the Jewish dead.

The question is what happens when performance is challenged by a documentary record.

Is the commitment merely something a state recites?

Or does membership authorize the institution to determine whether its standards have been honored?

IHRA's experts already acted

In April 2019, an unusually broad group of IHRA office-holders issued a statement of grave concern regarding LGGRTC's treatment of Jonas Noreika. The signature block opened with Ambassador Georges Santer, then Chair of IHRA; Professor Yehuda Bauer, Honorary Chair; and Dr. Wichert ten Have, adviser to IHRA. They were joined by the sitting chairs and recent chairs of IHRA's expert working groups and committees.

They identified the institution.

They identified the historical figure.

They referred to documentary sources indicating Noreika's key role in the ghettoization and expropriation of Jews in the Siauliai district.

They criticized LGGRTC's attempts to rehabilitate Noreika and its suggestion that he had been an active rescuer without evidence of his direct participation in rescue.

They connected the matter directly to IHRA's Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion, including efforts to excuse or minimize the participation of collaborators.²⁴

The institutional status of that statement must be described correctly.

It was not a criminal judgment, a civil adjudication or a consensus decision of the entire IHRA Plenary. But it was signed by the Chair of the organization, its Honorary Chair, an adviser, and current and former leaders of its expert bodies.²⁵

It does not need to be exaggerated.

Its actual significance is sufficient.

The experts working within the institution Lithuania invokes as a Holocaust-remembrance credential publicly warned that Lithuania's state historical center was attempting to justify and rehabilitate a man whose participation in Jewish ghettoization and expropriation was documented.

The warning has remained public.

²⁴ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, "Statement on Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance of Lithuania" (2019),

<https://holocaustremembrance.com/statements/statement-center-study-genocide-resistance-lithuania>; IHRA, "Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion," <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-holocaust-denial-distortion>.

²⁵ The 2019 statement's signature block opened with Ambassador Georges Santer, Chair of the IHRA; Professor Yehuda Bauer, Honorary Chair; and Dr. Wichert ten Have, adviser to the IHRA. It then listed six sitting working-group and committee chairs and five former chairs. The statement was not a criminal or civil judgment and was not a consensus decision of the entire IHRA Plenary.

The underlying state narrative has remained substantially uncured.

Grant's IHRA Was Warned in 2019. Lithuania Did Not Cure states the procedural consequence.

My earlier article stated the evidentiary consequence.

This article states the historical consequence.

IHRA is now standing where the League stood: in possession of a commitment, a warning and a record.

What IHRA can actually do

IHRA does not require judicial power to act institutionally.

It can ask Lithuania for a written response to the 2019 statement.

It can ask what materials were corrected, withdrawn or independently reviewed.

It can ask whether LGGRTC continues to maintain that Noreika was a rescuer and what direct evidence supports that conclusion.

It can refer the matter to its expert bodies.

It can ask whether a state historical institution criticized by IHRA experts is being used, directly or indirectly, to supply historical authority in the prosecution of a Jewish citizen.

It can publish Lithuania's answer.

It can compare the answer with the documentary record.

It can decide whether a Member Country has dealt openly and accurately with the historical record.

IHRA also already asks every Member Country to complete a basic questionnaire and, where available, publishes a country report supplied by the national delegation. That reporting is not independent adjudication. But it is standing institutional machinery. Lithuania's report can be required to address what was done in response to the 2019 warning, rather than allowing the warning and the country credential to occupy separate pages of the same website.²⁶

IHRA has already adopted a consensus statement condemning the rehabilitation of persons complicit in the Holocaust and the genocide of the Roma. The organization therefore possesses both the vocabulary and an institutional forum for addressing rehabilitation.²⁷

The precise consequences available under IHRA's rules must be determined by IHRA. They should not be invented by advocates.

But a body does not need a court's power to decide whether its own standards have meaning.

It does not need criminal jurisdiction to ask whether its warning was answered.

²⁶ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, "Lithuania," Member Country profile, <https://holocaustremembrance.com/countries/lithuania>. IHRA country pages state that all Member Countries are asked to complete a basic questionnaire on Holocaust education, remembrance and research; answers and any available Country Report are supplied by the national delegations, which are responsible for keeping the information current.

²⁷ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, "IHRA Statement on Rehabilitation," adopted by consensus at the Berlin Plenary, 7 July 2020, <https://holocaustremembrance.com/statements/ihra-statement-on-rehabilitation>. The statement condemns attempts to rehabilitate the reputations of persons complicit in the crimes of the Holocaust and the genocide of the Roma.

It does not need treaty-enforcement machinery to determine whether membership functions as a commitment or merely as a diplomatic credential.

The first remedy is a decision.

No more “for information”

The League archive contains a phrase that should now serve as a warning.

À titre d’information.

For information.

The League received the Lithuanian promise.

It received the Jewish memorial.

It received the electoral opinions.

It received the parliamentary transcript.

It received the arithmetic.

It received the interpellation identifying eleven statements that did not correspond to reality.

It received the names of the affected farmers and institutions.

It preserved so much of the record that Grant and I can reconstruct the process a century later.

That is not institutional success.

An archive can preserve a failure perfectly.

The Jewish representatives did not lack evidence. They had statutes, gazette numbers, parliamentary transcripts, legal opinions, electoral calculations and named cases.

What they lacked was an institution willing to state what the assembled evidence proved.

The sequence was simple:

Promise.

Domestic retrenchment.

A more favorable account presented abroad.

Jewish documentation of the difference.

Procedural closure.

I am not arguing for a single uninterrupted Lithuanian policy from 1919 to 2026. Authoritarian government, Soviet occupation, Nazi occupation, the murder of Lithuanian Jewry, renewed Soviet occupation and restored independence stand between the periods. Any argument that erases those ruptures would be historically indefensible.

The continuity is institutional, not chronological.

At different moments Lithuania has obtained international legitimacy through commitments concerning Jewish rights, Jewish history or the Jewish dead.

At different moments Jewish evidence has challenged the performance of those commitments.

The recurring danger is that the international institution receives the evidence but refuses the conclusion.

The guarantor's choice

The League did not fail because it lacked declarations.

It had declarations.

It did not fail because it lacked procedures.

It had procedures.

It did not fail because the Jewish representatives arrived too late or without evidence.

They arrived while the institutions existed, while the votes could be counted, while the officials could be questioned and while the promises remained recent.

The failure was that procedure became a substitute for judgment.

A guarantor that receives every document but decides no dispute does not protect the right. It protects the appearance of having a system.

IHRA's responsibility is not the responsibility of a court. It is narrower.

But it is more substantial than the responsibility of an archive.

Lithuania should be heard. The documents should be identified. The distinction between allegation, archival fact, historical interpretation and institutional distortion should be maintained. The 2019 expert statement should be answered on its substance.

Then IHRA should decide.

Did its experts identify a genuine distortion problem in 2019?

Did Lithuania correct it?

Does continued membership require correction after notice?

Can a state historical institution retain international Holocaust-remembrance legitimacy while refusing to answer the documentary criticism issued by the organization's own experts?

Those are institutional questions.

IHRA is capable of answering them.

The League's archive shows what happens when the guarantor receives the record and refuses to reach a conclusion.

IHRA cannot change that archive.

It can decide not to enter it.

About the author

Eugene J. Levin is the founder and president of Dim Bom Productions, LLC. Born in Riga, Latvia, he immigrated to the United States in 1989. He is the producer and director of the award-winning documentary *Baltic Truth*, which examines the Holocaust in Eastern Europe and its continuing consequences. This article draws upon an ongoing research collaboration with Grant Arthur Gochin, whose archival, legal and institutional research is linked throughout the text. Eugene Levin is solely responsible for the analysis and conclusions expressed here.