

BAGEL SHOP

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Dear reader,

Here we stand again before the gates of spring. Torrential showers will come, the gardens will bloom again and again we will fall into a languid torpor, although this time it's that of summer rather than winter. But that will come later. Right now it's time to wake up. Let's get happy!

The latest issue of the Bagel Shop contains an interview with Dr. Linas Venclauskas about anti-Semitism in the Lithuanian press. Geršonas Taicas tells us about the cantors at the Choral Synagogue in Vilnius. We will also make an excursion to the shtetl of Shveksna. Also for your consideration: some brief news items, reflecting important activities and events in the community. Read the Bagel Shop and come enjoy some Jewish treats at the Bagel Shop Café located at Pylimo street no. 4 in Vilnius. As always, we look forward to your ideas, comments and suggestions. Write us at radvile@lzb.lt

Radvilė

NEWS ROUND-UP

2018

September 10 The Kaunas Regional Public Library hosted the launch of the book “Žydai Pakaunėje” [Jews of the Kaunas Region]. The book was compiled by Dr. Inga Stepukonienė, associate professor at the Kaunas faculty of Vilnius University and a teacher at the Jonučių gymnasium in Garliava. The library hosted an exhibit of books from around the world about Jews and mainly Litvaks.

September 24 Two memory stones placed in Old Town of Ukmergė (Vilkomir), one to honor Ukmergė rabbi, head of the Slobodka yeshiva and rabbinical council member Josif Zusmanovitch (1895-1941) placed next to the former synagogue on Vasario 16 street, the other to honor photographer Mausha Levi (1886-1941) who studied photography in New York until 1918 and opened a photo studio in Ukmergė with Simon Bayer in 1919. The latter memory stone was installed at Kauno street no. 17 at the location of the former photography studio.

September 24 US Holocaust Museum program coordinator for oral history Ina Navazelskis gave a lecture at Sugihara House in Kaunas called “Voice of Kaunas: The Holocaust, Deportation and World War II: Oral History Testimonies.” Navazelskis has conducted over 300 interviews with Holocaust survivors, eye-witnesses and rescuers since 2001 when she began working at the museum.

September 27 Dr. Marija Krupoves-Berg performed ghetto songs in Yiddish at a concert to mark the 75th anniversary

of the destruction of the Vilnius ghetto held at the Lithuanian Jewish Community, accompanied on piano by jazz pianist Artūras Anusauskas.

September 27 Assoc. Prof. Aušra Pažėraitė gave lecture “Aspects of the Religious Thinking of the Vilna Gaon: Between Rationalism and Mysticism” in Vilnius. Lecture sponsored by Open Society Fund, Lithuanian Association of Religious Studies Scholars.

September 28 Juozas Naujalis music gymnasium in Kaunas unveiled memorial plaque commemorating teacher, violinist and Righteous Gentile Vladas Varčikas and held concert in his honor.

End of September Information boards erected at two locations in Zapyškis township in the Kaunas region describing Jewish community there from 16th century to their mass murder in the fall of 1941.

October Lithuanian Jewish Community (LJC) hosted exhibit of Michailas Duškesas's collection of documents and photographs to mark the 75th anniversary of the destruction of the Vilnius ghetto. The exhibit included documents on Vilnius figures such as Rabbi Haim Ozer Grozdinski, Tsemakh Shabad, the banker Izrael Bunimovitch, businessman Isak Shuman and others.

October 4 The Nechama Lifshitz ensemble from Israel performed in the theater hall of Vilnius University at an



evening dedicated to Jewish heroism in the Vilnius ghetto. Pianist Regina Driker directed and hosted the event.

October 11 The Destinies series of meetings and lectures hosted by the LJC put on an evening dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the births of composer and maestro Saulius Sondeckis and Simon Alperovitch. The Musica Camerata Baltica trio performed musical works and the film “Aš kažkaip laimingas” (2014) and a television interview of Sondeckis by Svyatoslav Belza were screened.

October 22 The Kaunas State Philharmonic hosted a concert to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Kaunas Jewish Community (KJC). Historian Dr. Linas Venclauskas spoke of the Jewish community's past and current events and the contribution they made to the establishment of the Lithuanian state. Dr. Venclauskas and KJC chairman Gercas Žakas presented thank-you letters from the Kaunas mayor and the director of the municipality's culture department to long-time, active members of the Community who had made a difference through their actions, including Fruma Kučinskienė, Judita Mackevičienė, Motelis Rozenbergas, Basia Šragienė, Julijana Zarchi, Simonas Dovidavičius and Žakas himself.

October 23 Simon Karczmar's exhibit “Monument to Dieveniškės” was opened at the Dieveniškės School of Business and Technology in the Šalčininkai region.

October 24 The LJC hosted a discussion on prospects for Jewish heritage conservation in 2020. The meeting discussed important goals and tasks for commemorating the Year of the Vilna Gaon and the Year of Lithuanian Jewish History with the focus on preservation of the Great Synagogue. Those attending included US embassy Vilnius advisor on political and economic issues Shai Moore

and foreign experts who are members of the LJC's working group on heritage preservation Lyudmila Sholokhova (YIVO, USA), Assumpció Hosta (AEPJ, Spain) and Sergey Kravstov (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel).

October 26 Kaunas Jewish Community chairman Gercas Žakas spoke about tolerance and shared human values at a conference called “Challenges to Human Values in a Changing Society” at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas.

October 28 Swimmers from Vilnius, Kaunas, Panevėžys and for the first time Šiauliai as well participated in the fall swimming competition held by the Lithuanian Makabi Athletics Club at the Girstutis sport and recreational complex in Kaunas.

October 31 New Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum exhibit opened at Ponar outside Vilnius financed by the Lithuanian Government Chancellery.

November 8 Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad chairman Paul Packer met with representatives of the Lithuanian Government Chancellery, discussed problems surrounding commemoration of the Great Synagogue site in Vilnius and raised the idea of additional agreements between the LJC, the Lithuanian Government, the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Department under the Lithuanian Culture Ministry and the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe (U.K.) for the preservation of Jewish heritage sites.

November 8 Memorial to Jews murdered in 1941 unveiled at old cemetery in Vandžiogala in Kaunas region.



November 12 Director of the Judaica Research Center at the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library Dr. Lara Lempertienė presented the exhibit “Reflections in a Broken Mirror” on Jewish life in Lithuania between the wars. The Vilnius Regional Jewish Community donated photography by Grigorijus Talas of children playing in the Vilnius Old Town in the early 1980s to the research center.

November 13 The Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library hosted the conference “Together towards the

Modern State: Litvaks in the History of the Statehood of Lithuania and Israel” to mark the 100th anniversary of the restoration of the Lithuanian state and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. Lithuanian and Israeli scholars spoke on the Litvak contribution to Lithuanian independence in 1918 and to the founding of the state of the Israel.

November 13-15 Professor Dan Michman, head of the International Institute for Holocaust Research, visited Vilnius University. He discussed the ghetto and Holocaust terminology including variations and interpretations in four lectures using fundamental texts to teach students about the specifics of Holocaust research and commemorative policies.

November 15 Evening held to commemorate pianist, performer and legendary teacher Nadežda Dukstulskaitė (1912-1978). Musicologist Prof. Leonidas Melnikas, pianist Assoc. Prof. Robertas Bekionis, the Ažuolai Club men’s choir (conducted by Prof. Povilas Gylys), Prof. Silvija Sondeckienė, cellist Valentinas Kaplūnas and opera soloist Ralfailas Karpis participated and shared their memories.



November 15 Vincas Kudirka Library in Kaunas celebrated 110th birthday of famous Litvak painter Neemija Arbit Blatas. Vilna Gaon Museum specialist Dr. Vilma Gradinskaitė delivered lecture “Neemija Arbit Blatas’s Influence on the Modernization of Lithuanian Art in the Interwar Period.”

November 16 On International Tolerance Day the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences hosted an awards ceremony organized by Lithuanian prime minister Saulius Skvernelis and the Ethnic Minorities Department under the Lithuanian Government to honor those who made significant contributions to the building of civil society, preserving ethnic cultures and inspiring cross-cultural dialogue in Lithuania. The honorary gold medal “For Merit” was presented to Kaunas Jewish Community chairman Gercas Žakas and an award and thanks were given to Kretinga regional administration head Juozas Mažeika for exceptional atten-

tion paid a minority culture, in this case Jewish heritage preservation and commemoration. Monetary prizes were awarded for best final academic works on ethnic minority themes to Rūta Matimaitytė, Aurėja Jutelytė and Justas Stončius.

November 19 First street sign with new street name Frankel (former Elnio street) unveiled in Šiauliai. The sign was installed on house no. 23 and commemorates the Frankel industrialist family and their contribution to the industry and development of the city of Šiauliai.



November 21 Second “Exceptional Women of the Panevėžys Region” conference held at the Panevėžys City Library. Panevėžys Jewish Community chairman Gennady Kofman surveyed the activities of famous female Jews of Panevėžys before 1940.

November 22 Tolerance Center of Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum opened exhibit “Simon Karczmar: From Devenišk to Tzfat.” Karczmar’s painting and graphic work is known in Israel and North America but was presented in Lithuania for the first time.

November 23 Ceremony to commemorate Lithuanian Jewish soldiers and the 100th anniversary of the Lithuanian military held at cemetery on Radvilėnai highway in Kaunas.

November 25 Lithuanian Makabi Athletics Club held target-shooting event at the GSKA Sports Club range in Vilnius. Event named in honor of Lithuanian military volunteer and two-time recipient of the Order of the Cross of Vytis Volf Kagan.

November 25 Lithuanian Makabi Grand Prix badminton championship held at Delfi Sports Center in Vilnius. Twelve teams from the Vilnius, Kaunas, Panevėžys and Prienai badminton clubs participated.

Beginning of December Launch of Aelita Ambrulevičiūtė, Gintė Konstantinavičiūtė and Giedrė Polkaitė-Pet-

kevičienė's book "The Buildings Speak: Daily Life of Jewish Streets in the 19th and 20th Centuries (until 1940)" at the Pavillion Book Weekend in Vilnius.

December 3 Polifonija concert held at Chamber Concert Hall in Šiauliai to celebrate 30th anniversary of the restoration of the Šiauliai Regional Jewish Community.

December 4 LJC members and friends gathered at the Radisson Blu Lietuva Hotel in Vilnius to celebrate the Community's 30th annual Hanukkah. More than 400 guests were treated to concerts by the Fajerlech ensemble and the Israeli klezmer group Gefilte Drive as well as saxophonist Juozas Kuraitis.



December 4 The LJC hosted the lecture/discussion "Mission: Lithuanian Citizens. Siberia." Exhibit of photographs of graves of Jewish, Polish, Russian and Lithuanian deportees in Siberia was presented.. Historian and deportation researcher Dr. Violeta Davoliūtė delivered a lecture on the multiethnic deportations of 1941 based on her academic work.

December 16 The 115th anniversary of the Choral Synagogue in Vilnius was celebrated with a concert by the St. Christopher Vilnius Chamber Orchestra conducted by Donatas Katkus.

December 18 Information board unveiled at the old Jewish cemetery in Panevėžys giving the history of the cemetery.

December 23 The Polish House of Culture in Vilnius hosted the Jewish women's contest "Israelit de Lita 5778/2018". Fourteen participants aged 18 to 55 and over demonstrated their cooking skills, talents and erudition. The participants attended lectures for several months before the contest on Jewish history and culture, cooking, cosmetics and fashion and the role of women in the Jewish family. Lectures were given by Dr. Lara Lempertienė, designer Seržas Gandžumianas, beautician Svetlana Rubin and Nida Degutienė, the author of an Israeli cookbook.

December 27 The 80th anniversary of the death of the Litvak poet Osip Mandelshtam (1891-1938) was commemorated outside the building located at Palangos street no. 1 in Kaunas. Commemorations took place at the same time in Riga, Warsaw, Kiev and Paris.

End of December The Lithuanian translation of Yitzhak Rudashevski's Vilnius ghetto diary translated by Dr. Mindaugas Kvietkauskas and published by the Lithuanian Jewish Community was nominated at the Tokyo TDC Annual Awards for 2019 and presented in their catalog of best works, volume 30.

2019

January 8 Sugihara House in Kaunas hosted the launch of Dr. Simonas Strelcovas's book "The Good, the Bad and Days of Hardship: Chiune Sugihara and World War II Refugees in Lithuania."

January 24 The Tolerance Center of the Vilna Gaon Museum in Vilnius opened a mobile exhibit called "When You Save a Life, You Save an Entire World."

January 25 The Ariogala Cultural Center in the Raseiniai district hosted the annual conference "Stories of Jewish Children."

January 25 A conference dedicated to fighting discrimination was held in Vilnius for International Holocaust Day.

January 27 The film "Testament" was screened at the Pasa-ka theater in Vilnius.

January 29 Documentary film "Who Will Write Our History?" shown at LJC. A prize-winner at American film festivals, this documentary by Nancy Spielber and Robert Grossman draws viewers into the reality of the Warsaw ghetto.

January 29 World premiere of Leib Glanz's oratorio "Night of the Holocaust" held at Church of Sts. John in Vilnius. American composer Joseph Ness arranged the choir, orchestra and soloists. Excerpts from Elie Wiesel's Night were read.

End of January Lithuanian Ministry of Culture announced brick synagogue in Pušalotas in the Panevėžys district was given protected status. The synagogue was constructed in 1913 replacing the earlier wooden synagogue at the same site. After World War II the Pušalotas synagogue was used as a building for production. After Lithuanian independence the synagogue was returned to the small Jewish population who consented to the operation of a mill in the building.

February and March The Old Town Hall section of the Kaunas City Museum opened an exhibit called “Lithuania in Litvak Works” featuring visual and documentary information from museums, archives and private collections in Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Germany, Italy, the US and Uruguay. The exhibit was scheduled to be shown later in Šiauliai, Zarasai and Telšiai.

February 11 The ninth athletics tournament dedicated to the memory of Liova Taicas (1952-2009) was held in Šiauliai with more than 120 athletes from the city and region of Šiauliai, Vilnius, Kaunas, Panevėžys, Klaipėda, Ukmergė, Žagarė and even Israel participating in indoor soccer, basketball, table tennis and chess matches.



February 14 Israeli scholar Serafima Velkovich gave a lecture called “The Fate of Litvaks in the Holocaust in Yad Vashem Documents and Projects” at the Haim Frankel villa. The event commemorated the 75th anniversary of the liquidation of the Šiauliai ghetto.

February 17 LJC hosted a presentation of the book “Vilnius Jewish World”, a collection of texts by Aaron Graon (1919-2009). His daughter, architect and restorer Tamara Garon and his son, Eugenius Garon, who holds a doctoral degree in mathematics, spoke about their father.

February 19 Launch of book “The Jewish Community of Švėkšna” from the 17th to the 20th Century by Monika Žąsytienė, a Bagel Shop project volunteer and a museum specialist at the Hugo Šojus Museum in Šilutė, at the LJC.

February 21 Uri Leviathan, professor and director of the Kibbutz Institute at Haifa University, presented his book

“From Hand to Hand”, translated to Lithuanian from Hebrew by Victoria Sideraitė-Alon.

February 21-24 The LJC presented books published with partial support from the Goodwill Foundation at the Vilnius Book Fair. Rudashevski’s “Vilnius ghetto diary” garnered the most attention, followed by Uri Leviathan’s “From Hand to Hand” and Ruth Reches’s “Hebrew Language Dictionary”. Sigita Chlebinskaitė won the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture’s prize for best book design for the Rudashevski diary. Events were also held by the LJC there to mark the 90th birthday of Litvak writer Grigoiry Kanovitch, with his sons Dmitri and Sergey speaking, and also Vilnius Religious Jewish Community chairman Simas Levinas and literary scholar Virginijus Gasiliūnas. A film called “Jonava Fed Me” (2018) featuring interviews with Kanovitch and the prize set up in 2017 in his name by the Jonava Public Library was screened. Book by Kanovitch called “Happy Eyes” (2018) was presented with the discussion of Donatas Puslys, Giedrė Kaukaitė, Paulius Gritėnas and Mindaugas Klusas.



February 24 Tolerant Person of the Year for 2018 awards were held at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. Director Gintaras Varnas won the title for his work seeking a new language in drama, with his works Nathan the Wise

and Ghetto cited. The Leonidas Donskis prize was awarded to Pranas Morkus.

February 26 The Tolerance Center of the Vilna Gaon Museum in Vilnius presented a book called "Leonidas Merkinas: A Life in Architecture" authored by Donaldas Andziulis and Eugenijas Gūzas.

February 27 The Vaidila theater held the first in a series of concerts dedicated to the 90th birthday of Litvak writer Grigoriy Kanovitch. Lukas Geniušas performed. The program included musical works by Chopin and Tchaikovsky and the premiere of Leonid Desyatnikov's Songs of Bukovina. Audience members received a gift of Kanovitch's book "Happy Eyes" published in 2018.



The traditional annual Limmud conference was held from **March 15 to 17** at the Europa Royale hotel in Druskininkai, Lithuania. LJC programs director Žana Skudovičienė said this year's event seemed both more sincere and more family-oriented than in earlier years.

Limmud is from the Hebrew word meaning "to learn" and Jews from throughout Lithuania and the world attend these annual events hosted and organized by the LJC of seminars, workshops and teachings on *yidishkeyt*, the Yiddish word for "Jewishness," both to learn more and just to spend time together.



Dear Bagel Shop reader,

Congratulations to you on the arrival of spring! The Community is still in full Passover mood, the holy day celebrating the liberation of the Jewish people, and as nature reawakens, so to are big ideas and inspiration for new work bubbling up to the surface. The second quarter of 2019 will be a busy one for the Community: in New York we discussed further opportunities for working together with YIVO and the American Zionist Movement organization and in Tblisi Lithuanian Jewish Community partner the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ) has organized meetings for celebrating the 20th anniversary of European Days of Jewish Culture. The LJC is among the most active members of the AEPJ, whose members include organizations from Spain, Portugal, Georgia, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Important meetings between Interpol and representatives of European Jewish communities have taken place in Brussels to discuss security for the communities and emergency management issues.

April saw meetings with the largest Litvak community abroad in South Africa whose members are still seeking answers to so-far unaddressed issues of historical justice.

The coming of spring also brought us ill tidings, as the Community lost two of its greatest knights, director of the Union of Former Ghetto and Concentration Camp Inmates Tobijus Jafetas, and master composer and conductor Anatolijus Šenderovas. With each such loss the Community loses some of its intellectual identity and we are reminded of our own transitory nature, while our losses also bring into sharper focus our appreciation of what we must still do for the benefit of our members.

I am grateful to all members of the Community and friends, you standing together with us is stimulating the Community to grow and improve.

*Mazl tov,
Faina Kukliansky, chairwoman
Lithuanian Jewish Community*

Society Loses Courage, Faith and Creativity by Following Anti-Semitic Stereotypes

The Lithuanian Jewish Community and the Lithuanian Department of Ethnic Minorities held a conference for International Holocaust Day aimed at fighting discrimination. Speakers talked about expression of ethnic hatred in Lithuania and the lack of Holocaust history in school curricula. Methods for fighting discrimination used in Canada, Greece and Norway were presented. Dr. Linas Venclauskas spoke about the anti-Semitic views Lithuanians held of Zionist organizations in the period between the two world wars. Venclauskas is an historian working at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas and is the vice president of the executive board of the Sugihara Foundation/Diplomats for Life organization. He agreed to speak to the Bagel Shop about hatred of others and expressions of anti-Semitism in Lithuania.



You've chosen a controversial topic of research, Holocaust history and anti-Semitism. How did you make this choice? Are you ever sorry you made this choice?

I became interested in the history of ethnic groups in Lithuania back when I began university, interested in their images and stereotypes, and the way ethnic groups were presented in the Lithuanian press. It was possible you had never met a Pole, a Russian or a Jew, and yet prejudicial images and stereotypes were already floating around in your mind taken from the press and other sources. Actually my initial research as a student involved stereotypes of Poles, until one of my teachers arrived from the United States, the late professor Alfred Erich Senn. He told me: "You know, there was this newspaper called "Į Laisvę" published in Kaunas in 1941. Look into it, look how they portrayed Jews." This research was what encouraged me to look more deeply into negative, confrontational episodes of the past. Emotionally they aren't the most pleasing, but they are crucial and necessary in order for me to understand myself better. From the very beginning I was asked why I undertook this, why I study Jewish history, and I always used to answer that I study the history of Lithuanians and Lithuania. I have never regretted my choice, and it is encouraging that in diving into the darkest depths there is always a ray of light that shines forth, an alternative opinion or action, empathy and regret, support and rescue, and that only again goes to show how complex and deep human nature is, and how little we understand it still.

You wrote a dissertation which examines the development of modern Lithuanian anti-Semitism in the periodical press from 1883 to 1940. What sentiments regarding ethnic minorities are dominant in the Lithuanian media currently, in your mind? Are the trends the same as in the interwar period? Are we living in a period of moral decline?

First of all, I would say the authors of that period were more honest, they wrote what they thought, and they thought all sorts of things. And we shouldn't forget the censorship, whether it was Russian or Lithuanian, because not all radical ideas got out into the open. I would also point out the general level of education: current society is more literate and so can understand more sophisticated texts and derive more meanings from them, but the Lithuanian publications of 1940 were rather didactic and prescriptive. And finally, the history of the 20th century with all the different local conflicts, world wars, the Holocaust and other genocides demonstrated humanity's level of hate and brutality and the relationship between word and deed. In order to carry out the isolation leading from restrictions on rights to mass murder there needs to be a certain emotional and mental climate, which the media are rather good at fostering. Understanding this, it's not just writers who assess their openly expressed thoughts critically, there are also different institutions and laws which limit free speech which might be based on xenophobia, racism and so on. This entire constellation of reasons means that in general the tone

of the media regarding minorities is rather positive, but anything can happen. On the other hand, the situation is much worse with modern forms of media--anonymous comments, personal blogs and web pages and social media. There is much more hate, many more negative stereotypes and abuse there. On the one hand it's harder to control this sort of situation, but on the other one sometimes gets the impression that no one really wants to do anything about it, meaning institutions mainly. Frequently publicly insulting texts are treated as a joke, an opinion or a trifle. This also goes to show society's level of maturity. And that's what we often think: there are institutions for this, let them take care of it. It seems that ethnic, religious and similar tensions are growing throughout the world, but my colleagues in the USA always say that when xenophobic, racist, anti-Semitic and similar statements appear in the public space, the citizens themselves immediately undertake to defend civil and democratic values with counter-arguments, understanding that if they don't defend basic values, no one else will do it for them.

What effect could the tide of brutal anti-Semitism arising again in the West have on the Lithuanian public mood and actions by Lithuanian society?

It's difficult to predict... One wants to believe it would be minimal. There can always appear loud-mouths, those believing in racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic boogeymen. This could seem like a sign of legitimacy to some of these people: look, if it's happening over there that means it's time for us to begin as well. Some members of society in pre-war Lithuania thought the same way in the 1920s and '30s. If Germany already hates Jews so much and is passing this on to neighboring countries, then it's time for us to take action as well. It has to be pointed out that while anti-Semitic sentiments intensified then, they didn't boil over into physically killing Jews or mass destruction of Jewish property. And now, it seems, it won't turn into systematic anti-Semitic action, at least I don't see indications of that. But that doesn't mean we can rest, we must always create and transmit news of tolerance, understanding and empathy, otherwise radicalism can spread very quickly. It's always easier to build walls of manipulation, suspicion and insecurity than to break them down.

You study the history of Lithuanian ethnic minorities with students at Vytautas Magnus University. What does the younger generation understand about the Holocaust? What's the attitude of students towards anti-Semitism? Do they see the history of Lithuanian ethnic minorities as their own history?

Teaching the Holocaust begins at the secondary-school level, so students at university already know about the tragedy. But the teaching at the schools is still based on facts and statistics, so their knowledge is horizontal and very rarely vertical, where events are experienced empathically, events which are endlessly violent, so sometimes this is a big emotional load

for university students. This topic isn't just challenging to students, but also to teachers. There were, after all, murderers, victims and spectators. I would add to this classical schematic by Raul Hilberg the category of rescuers as well. Although I think the students experience the tragedy of the Holocaust with empathy, at least, I've never encountered those who support the mass murder and judge it positively, just as I've never encountered many of the attitudes characteristic of the elder generation which say: fine, we've talked about Lithuanian collaborator murderers, but there were also Lithuanian rescuers, we would do better to talk about them. This is where the issue of harmony and scale comes up. Talking about anti-Semitism with students, I haven't seen it publicly, but I think there are all sorts of opinions. For some it's the youth search for an answer, because anti-Semitism as with other forms and ideologies of hate are first of all convenient in that it gives easy answers, and some people are attracted by this. On the other hand, the attitudes of parents and grandparents is important: the younger generation can "possess" knowledge from modern educational means, but they often tend to adopt the opinions of their relatives over "formal" education. From my formal experience as a teacher and from other educational work, I can testify the multicultural past of Lithuania isn't merely interesting and attractive to Lithuanian youth. Some become profoundly involved with it, others discover something unexpected and begin to pull at it like a ball of string, and begin to perceive their environment differently. What seemed like completely known streets, buildings and courtyards say something new and vibrant. I was left surprised when registration to a tour of the Kaunas ghetto was completed in less than two hours; I had the chance to see that I myself have some prejudices. I thought it was too difficult a topic, giving rise to more depression than positive emotions. I want to think that the time has come when Lithuania's past and present are understood as "ours," not cherry-picking episodes which are comfortable for us, but critically assessing the whole.

The "threat" to the dignified existence of the Lithuanian nation posed by vibrant Jewish economic power in the interwar period was annihilated in the Holocaust, but expressions of anti-Semitism didn't disappear. Why is that? What does our society lose by following anti-Semitic stereotypes?

Some researchers say prejudice against Jews is the longest-enduring form of hate, distinguishing between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism. There exists the phenomenon of anti-Semitism in the absence of Jews. Conspiracy theories and ideologies of hate such as anti-Semitism have complex psychological aspects. On the one hand they offer a tranquil, safe and affluent life. We all seek that through intentional action and want it subconsciously. On the other hand they are unreflective, claiming the reason for our misfortune is disconnected from us and our community, in other words, that someone is hindering and harming us. In the case of anti-Semitism that's

the Jews. One doesn't have to think much or look more deeply into it, the enemy and the source of misfortune is clear, one just has to deal with them and life will be good. This kind of stereotypical thinking doesn't lead to self-analysis or self-criticism, and it doesn't say that not all efforts can be successful and lead to the desired goals. On the contrary, the illusion is created that not much needs to be done, get rid of the Jews and everything will change immediately. This kind of deceit is extremely effective and attractive psychologically. That's why it still has so much power.

I believe society in going by anti-Semitic stereotypes loses courage, hope and creativity. After all, our negative stereotypes of others primarily testify to our own psychological complexes. We are unable to create the sort of life we want and, in order to justify this, instead of analyzing our mistakes we create an external boogeyman: they are hurting us. If they don't exist, we won't have challenges or problems. But this is completely false because we are making a world full of contrived enemies. If others differ from us to some extent, that means they're dangerous. This kind of thinking is exhausting and leads nowhere, it makes us withdraw into our shell or immediately adopt a defensive position. In the final analysis a painting painted using one color is monotonous and boring, but life and world are not like that, it is only diversity that allows us to feel joy, prospects for the future and the interconnectedness of things into a whole. It is only in a climate of diversity that we can perceive our own individual characteristics and demonstrate them, not in a relationship of domination, but in partnership and trust.

In public discussions, when the Holocaust is mentioned, deportations and partisan resistance to the Soviet occupation are often selected as counterarguments. How can we ease this tension?

It's a complicated question. Professional historians realized long ago there is no one history. There are histories, plural, there are witnesses to events and recorded memories which can be contradictory and even contrary. But if it is the authentic testimony of a person, it has the right to exist. The question is how we interpret different sources and where we place the stress. Knowledge of and facts about history aren't sufficient here. Back at the dawn of the discipline of history there was a motto, *sine ira et studio*, which means without anger and without bias. It still applies today. Again it seems as if we live in a society of contenders: I must win, my word must be final and so on. Under occupation Lithuanian society evolved with the idea that there is one true history. Any other was impossible. But there is. No one of us has always been rational and clear-minded, only good or only bad, throughout our lives. And that's how it is with history: it is varied, multifaceted, so we have to learn to question and to listen, to put ourselves into the shoes of another as much as that's possible, to discuss, to seek after a common answer to issues of concern, bearing in mind that principle of several millennia: without anger, without bias. This isn't very quick and it isn't easy, it's a long process, but it's worthwhile because it enriches. Emotionally, intellectually and empathically.

Interviewed by Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik

At the conference Dr. Venclauskas delivered his presentation "Atrophy of Emotions: Interwar Lithuanian Anti-Semites on the Zionist Movement in Lithuania." We invite you to read an unauthorized translation of an excerpt from that presentation.

Since 2004 I have been researching expressions of anti-Semitism by Lithuanians from the time when "Aušra" [newspaper] appeared in 1883 till the Soviet occupation in June of 1940. It was in 1883 that began an uninterrupted tradition in Lithuanian-language publications allowing for the definition of content and trends in anti-Semitic publications. Basically all publications in Lithuanian responded to anti-Semitic stereotypes and attitudes dominant in Europe claiming Jews have a tendency to commit fraud, deceit and in general to harm Christians, and also that Jews cannot be loyal to nation-states and instead engage in all sorts of conspiracies and destruc-

tive actions ranging from the greed arising from capitalism to Bolshevism and other modern ideologies: liberalism and socialism and their variations. Also mentioned was Masonry, which was [allegedly] directed by Jews at that time. Although there were articles based on racist arguments and claiming Jews were members of a lower race, degenerates and so on, these were published relatively infrequently.

Periodicals tied to Christian Democrats or conservative right-wing ideology in general were the main venues for anti-Semitic publications, and there were cases of ultra-nationalist publications which attacked Jews but which were stopped by the censorship then in place. Furthermore, the establishment and spread of national rebirth and nationalist sentiments among Lithuanians and Jews (and others) shared many essential features.

The creation of visions of one's nation and state was very much connected with the creation of images and the sphere of emotions because, after all, it wasn't just a matter of constructing but also of loving the vision one created, to put trust

in it and to attempt to convince others of its reality. Growing national identity and the end of World War I in Central and Eastern Europe fortified the realization of the right of nations to self-determination through the establishment of nation-states, although the higher principle of Realpolitik didn't allow for this in Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Trans-Caucasia (in the former Russian Empire), just as in Palestine where the British cherished good relations with the Arabs over the growing national consciousness of the Jews and ever-louder calls for a State of Israel.

I see a lot of similarities between the confirmation of the status of the Lithuanian language and the activities of YIVO. In both cases it had to be demonstrated to opponents that these languages [Yiddish and Lithuanian] were not of a lower status and were appropriate for expressing abstract academic thought, love of homeland, fidelity and devotion, that there were able to coin political terms, that it was possible to use them to discuss governance, engagement of the citizenry, and so on. So these reasons and many others suggest to me the idea of talking about the atrophy of emotions, in this case nationalist feelings, and understanding (the phrase "to step into someone else's shoes" perfectly applies here), when the Lithuanian and Jewish communities who had suffered and survived the Tsarist oppression undertook the authorship of visions of their own freedom, visions which did not necessarily coincide and which didn't have to, but which could be understood and judged emotionally and intellectually as positive.

For authors predisposed against Jews, any Jewish expression was to be criticized, such that even positive processes for the creation of a national identity were interpreted in the anti-Semitic imagination as yet another "devious" Jewish plan. One of the first texts to discuss Jewish migration to Palestine appeared in "Tėvynės sargas" [newspaper] in 1900: "*Considering the Jewish faith and Jewish longing, we clearly see there is no reason for us to be friends with them, so let's sell more ourselves, let's practice trades, and let the Jews make their profits through field work, at factories, or let them go mine coal, let the Jews rather serve us, and not that we should be their boy-servants in our own land and suffer their insults and frauds. If these jobs are too difficult for the Jews, those which our people perform, then they should move to Palestine to ply [their] trade among the Turks: Bon voyage!*"¹

The author offers two alternatives: either Lithuanians take over the professions dominated by Jews, or the Jews take up farm work and other exhausting labor. In other case Jews must leave. He sees Zionism and the Jewish struggle for their own state not as an ongoing positive process of liberation as among other nations, but as an opportunity to deport the Jews



to the land some of them desire so greatly. Unlike "Varpas" [newspaper], "Tėvynės sargas", as national rebirth intensified and took on new forms, maintained a clear and closed border between Jews and Lithuanians. In "Varpas" from 1900 onwards we can trace a clear change in the rhetoric regarding Jews, becoming more favorable, encouraging if only for practical considerations communication and cooperation, but "Tėvynės sargas" never deviates from its platform and party line. The first issue in 1904 discusses a whole spectrum of dangers. The author cautions the reader to protect himself from the darkness of the Poles, from the Polish nobility and from the [literal] movement of nomads--Jews and Turkish raiders. The author sees the Zionist movement as another means to rule the world. The author says meetings were being held to support the Zionist idea. He reports one such in the city of Minsk in Byelorussia: "*The police don't molest them because a Jew isn't a Samogitian. Oh dear God, what a disturbance there was there, what fist fights, what a din, it seems that several devils entered their ranks as if during a seizure. They shouted and screamed thinking they had already purchased Palestine and kugel [potato pudding] was already being made in their kingdom. One of the braver little Jews said that it was good here, that there is good business without Zion, and this brave little fellow was taken care of with an abundance of spraying, his last whiskers [side burns] were torn out, and it seemed as if it hadn't been a Jew who had opposed them, but a pig squealing while swilling kugel.*"²



things are done in the field of the Jews which are simply not understandable. ... Among us they most clearly seek that which equally has nothing in common with the restoration of the Lithuanian state, just as their Zionism has nothing in common with the planned Palestine. ... The Jews openly load up their people's treasury, entirely unauthorized by the state to do this, because their institutions are maintained and financed by that state. We are talking about gigantic capital collected in the form of a kosher treasury which was called in Russian times "korobchiiy zbor". ... In the new Lithuania we all perceive the burden of this treasury, we see how these monies are collected and we dare not ask our autonomous Jews what in Heaven's name this money is being used for." ³ The author seconds the conviction of some Lithuanian publicists that the Jews in Lithuania enjoy extraordinarily good conditions but are still dissatisfied. Moreover, according to the author's reasoning, the Jewish community in Lithuania was committing a collective crime by placing additional taxes on its members. Contrary to this idea, different organizations and associations in Lithuania then and now collected membership fees from members for different internal needs and resources. The author doesn't trust Jews or their national rebirth and in general doesn't want to connect Jews with a specific location or ideology.

The publication "Movement against Jews" appeared in late 1922 in "Krašto balsas" [newspaper] and the title accurately reflects the content. Unfortunately, Lithuanians still haven't come to a better understanding: "But it is an undisputed fact that the Zionist Jews are secretly taking gold from Lithuania to Palestine; there is also no doubt that the Jews have and are insinuating themselves into the Lithuanian co-operatives. **In this way they set the people against themselves** (emphasis mine--L.V.). It is just sad that Lithuanians are too slow and do not like to organize in order to strike against this group of speculators. Just as they tricked them in the past, so they trick them now. The Jews want to swallow up all Lithuanian institutions and establishments." ⁴

Stereotypically Jews are associated with socialism and Bolshevism (as well as with capitalism, of course) and this label is applied without greater discrimination to the entire Jewish community. The author going by the pseudonym Metalist shares similar thoughts in his article in "Darbininkas" [newspaper].⁵ The author of an article in "Tėvų žemė" [newspaper] in 1934 attempts first to discuss "confused" Jews whom he connects primarily with the Zionists. He also tries to analyze the Lithuanian Jewish community: Jews who were born and raised in Lithuania, who love their country as their one and only homeland, and Jews who are "purely business people" and who are "concealed foreigners" who find it difficult to discover anything in common with Lithuanians and their aspirations: "There are different Jewish groups thinking about

Ironically describing the meeting, the author gives the impression he had been there, and includes a number of stereotypes. Unity of thought in Jewish thinking is underlined: all Jews must obey the dominant idea and the disobedient receive the condemnation of the entire community. In principle, the presentation of the considerations on the idea of a Jewish state is not presented as a battle of ideas but as a shouting match. The author openly doubts whether the Jews will be able at all to buy enough land in Palestine, but in his summation doesn't let his thoughts get in the way of his hope: "The Jews would [should] leave Lithuania immediately so that we Lithuanians could rise up to commercial activity ... Wouldn't it be great if Lithuanians lived in the towns and cities, Lithuanians on the farms, Lithuanians on the manor estates, Lithuanian craftsmen, Lithuanian, factories, all merchants Lithuanian ... only the Lithuanian language would be heard everywhere."²

The Jewish nationalist movement isn't supported and parallels are not made with the Lithuanian rebirth, nor with efforts to resist oppression (the dominant idea was that the Jews were living so well already). One author writing in "Tauta" [newspaper] in 1920 reasoned: "The Jews everywhere in the past and now have created a state within a state. But this doesn't protect them from the staunch aspiration of equality. Among us many

their own state in Palestine. They are followers of Hitler from the opposite end [of the spectrum]. For these Jews, Lithuania is only temporary, a passing phase in life. All of their hopes, all of their desires for a better life are directed towards a state foreign to Lithuania. They don't care about the welfare of Lithuania, only of Palestine. For them, Lithuania is just a rich pasture.”⁶ This kind of Jew, the author says, only exploit Lithuania and her people, and summarizes: “All rights with Lithuanians in Lithuania to the honorable Jews, citizens of Lithuania. To the second-class commercial souls: commercial rights and a school. ... And to the citizens of Palestine, [only] the rights of foreigners.”⁶ This sort of strict and uncompromising categorization of Jews in the Lithuanian press didn't set down deep roots and only appeared occasionally.

In “Tėvų žemė” Albinas Briedis presented an analysis of events in Šiauliai in 1934 during which, the author says, provisor Antanas Masiulis had been on Vilniaus street in the city and asked “Jews standing on the sidewalk not to block the way. The group, which included several uniformed members of the Jewish HeHalutz organization, attacked provisor Masiulis, aged 47, with their fists.” The author summarized the story by saying: “It turns out inviting the Jews to Lithuania is a clear mistake of history for which more and more Lithuanians will suffer.” Although the author is only discussing the actions of one Jewish group--members of HeHalutz--both the title and passages in the text are not as nuanced as earlier-described publications. The author's position is clear: Jews cause problems and provoke conflict in Lithuania, and therefore contacts between Jews and Lithuanians should be restricted. We don't know if the author just presented some random aggressive group as Jewish Zionists. It's possible the unmasking of the “HeHalutz members” was an intentional decision made by the newspaper's editorial staff rather than that of the author. Right after Briedis's article there is an item called “Understanding of the Jews Rising:” “Fifty Jews left Kaunas for Palestine. These are wealthier little Jews. But next week promises to see a larger party of Jews called HeHalutz, farmers, leaving. It is a good thing the patriotic consciousness of the Jews is rising and they are travelling to their old homeland.”⁸ This brief news item complements Briedis's article in which Jewish “HeHalutzim” are aggressively and disrespectfully predisposed towards Lithuanians. The growing patriotism of Jews is to a welcome phenomenon because an element inimical to Lithuanians is quitting the country. There is hope expressed that the process will be quick and quantitative.

J. Vaišnora's initial attitude in “Židiny” [magazine] in 1937 is clear and unchanging: Jews and Christians, and in this case Lithuanians, were, are and will be alien to one another, so the only problem worth considering is not how to overcome disagreements and misunderstandings which arise, but how to protect oneself and society from Jews. The author reasons that attempts over several centuries to assimilate the Jews were un-

successful, but worse than this, he says, is that some Jews don't want to be recognized publicly as Jews, changing their speech, their attire, adopting intellectual and esteemed professions instead of just the usual and ancient trade of the Jews, mercantilism and money-lending. It is no surprise the following thoughts by the author and his referential field is based on anti-Semitic attitudes and biological arguments: “The famous English writer Hilaire Belloc in his book “The Jews” states the clear fact that Jews are a disruptive element because of their hegemonic aspirations and revolutionary spirit, and compares them to foreign bodies which have become lodged in a healthy organism, and therefore causing irritation and a reaction within it. ... Poncins [?] reduces all proposed prescriptions down to three: assimilation, the ghetto and Palestine, or Zionism.”⁹

According to the author's reasoning, Jewish citizens with full rights demanded for themselves as an ethnic minority additional privileges, thus discriminating against the ethnic majorities. In the end there is the final method of solution: Zionism and the hope the ethnic sentiments of Jews will be sufficiently strong for the majority of them to remove themselves to live in Palestine. The author's conclusion is pessimistic: the “Jewish problem” is obvious, urgent and demands a solution, but so far there are no fitting and effective methods to do so, so Vaišnora is left no other choice but to turn the issue into a metaphysical one and to summarize by saying: “This longevity and endurance of the Jewish nation is a sign the Jews are an eternal nation. This is the secret of God's plan.”⁹

In the imagination ruled by suspicion, superstition and stereotypes action by any opponent--in this case the Jews--is considered just another in a series of attempts to inflict harm, and even positive examples of fostering national consciousness and establishing one's own state are considered negative by the above-mentioned authors, who in turn are attempting to wake up their readers and show the true face of Zionism.

¹ Žydai (piešinys), Tėvynės sargas, No. 6–7 (1900), 54.

² R. M., Dar nuo ko mums reikia gintis?, Tėvynės sargas, No. 1 (1904), 65–67.

³ N. Kas tai yra? Tauta, No. 39 (1920), 2.

⁴ Krašto balsas, No. 37 (1922), 1–2.

⁵ Metalistas, Žydai žydus išduoda, Darbininkas, No. 24 (1923), 1.

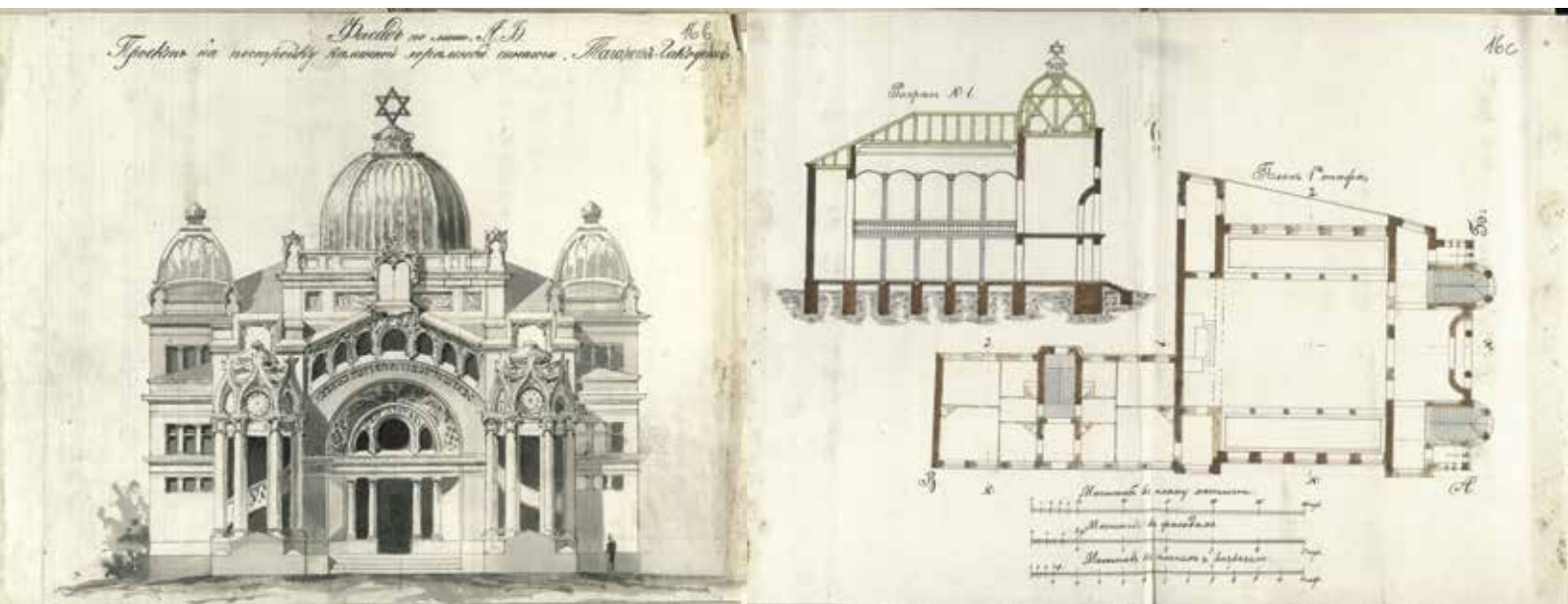
⁶ Tomas Žuvėdra, Piliečiai ar svetimšaliai? (Dėl mūsų santykių su žydais), Tėvų žemė, No. 10 (1934), 3.

⁷ Alb. Briedis, Žydai kelia nerimą (Dėl įvykių Šiauliuose), Tėvų žemė, No. 14 (1934), 12.

⁸ Žydų susipratimas kyla, Tėvų žemė, No. 14 (1934), 12.

⁹ Dr. J. Vaišnora, Žydų klausimas, Židiny, No. 11 (1937), 418.

The House of Prayer Taharot HaKodesh (Purity of Spirit) Association and the Vilnius Choral Synagogue



The first minyan of Maskilim was a family gathering, established by the father and son Saul and Hirsh Tzvi Katzenelenbogen in the courtyard at Rūdninkų street no. 15 in early 1820. It continued until the end of 1840. But the idea for starting the first public Maskilim synagogue only came up in October of 1846 following magid Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Ze'ev Volf's (1788-1866) public attacks on the Haskalah movement and the writer Mordechai Aaron Gintzburg (1795-1846). By the summer of 1847 several of the more prominent Maskilim asked for permission to establish a Maskilim synagogue at Samson Abromavich's house in the rented outbuilding at German street no. 21. Jewish children who attended secular schools were savagely attacked by Jewish fanatics while attending synagogue and houses of prayer. Senior Vilnius city doctor Mendel Trachtenberg supported the idea of starting a Maskilim synagogue as did honorable citizens Volf Tugendgold and Leon

Rozental, wine merchant Albert Monashevich, the merchant Avraham Lebensohn, the poet Micah Joseph Lebensohn, and others, teachers and parents of students, and the consent of the community rabbi was given.

Traditional enemies of the Haskalah twice appealed to the provincial government requesting a ban on opening the new synagogue, and they even sent a petition to the interior minister in St. Petersburg. But with support from the superintendent of the Vilnius educational district, the Maskilim received permission, and the new synagogue open in May of 1847 with the governor of the province in attendance.

In later years the synagogue moved to Yechiel Danzig's house in the Ašmena alley (now Ašmena street), then later to the Gordon home on German street. The Taharot HaKodesh was different from the other kloizes in Vilnius and distinguished for its orderly prayer services and attention to detail. Prayer was

accompanied by a choir and thus arose its second name, the Choral Synagogue (or Khorshul in Yiddish). Much attention was devoted to regular sermons, initially in German, then from the end of the 19th century in Russian. The establishment of the Maskilim synagogue open to the public was clearly a political, ideological and cultural statement demonstrating the maturity of the Haskalah movement and its preparedness to move into public life and directly oppose the conservative section of the Jewish community.

Just after the synagogue was established the idea was formulated to build a separate building for the synagogue, but, as a Jewish newspaper in 1867 lamented, "this is expensive." The extant architectural plan for the Taharot HaKodesh synagogue prepared by architect Mechislav Strebeika in 1877 shows there were big plans for a separate building. The synagogue was to have been built on New Street (now Islandi-

jos street) in neo-Gothic style: a large hall of prayer with the ark of the Torah together with the bimah in the northeast and a women's gallery on the other three sides. This plan never came to fruition and the Talmud-Torah school was built on the site instead in 1891. In 1878 Albert Monashevich, a merchant in the first guild and an affluent admirer of the Taharot HaKodesh, built an unconnected building as an annex to his home at German street no. 22 so the synagogue could operate there, with a women's gallery and central bimah already built inside.

In 1885 following a dispute between the home owner and the congregation the synagogue was closed down, the wooden pews removed and the bimah donated to residents in Vilnius's New City. A year later, though, during Rosh Hashanah in September of 1886, a new synagogue opened in a building leased on Police alley (now Arklių street). It was described as "a squat and narrow building, with the women's section similar to a chicken coop." In 1888 the board of directors of the synagogue asked for help, asking for a fee from "the box," in order "to improve the house of prayer and enlarge it." It seems this request went unanswered. In 1892 a fishharmo-

nia was installed in the synagogue but it was only used on holy days.

In 1894 the synagogue's board selected a "construction commission" to support the project for a permanent synagogue building, without result. The idea was revived in the period from 1897 to 1898. A record of the meeting of Taharot HaKodesh House of Prayer members/congregants which existed in Vilnius, dated September 12, 1899, has survived. The meeting took place at Eliyashberg's home and they considered the issue of finding funding to buy a plot of land for building the synagogue, and the conditions in the terms of agreement for that purchase. They resolved to seek a loan from the Tula Agricultural Bank to finance the land purchase and building by putting the house they were in up as collateral. Some of the funds for purchasing the building they planned to collect as fees, voluntary donations and gifts. The 58 member-congregants including rabbis, merchants, industrialists, doctors, teachers, publishers and others. They signed on to an authorization granting the board of directors of the House of Prayer organization great powers and personally pledged to guarantee loans needed to build the synagogue.

The house and an empty lot at Zavalna street no 35 (now Pylimo street no 39) were purchased from Eliyashberg in 1899 in order to build a permanent synagogue and the temporary synagogue moved in. In 1901 the architect Aleksei Polozov drafted the plan for a luxurious Choral Synagogue, but later the synagogue was actually built by Jewish technician and builder Daniel Rozenhauz according to a much simpler plan. Polozov only directed construction operations. The keystone was laid on April 23, 1902. There were 350 seats for men and 200 for women, central heating and electric light in the new synagogue. Cost of construction exceeded 45,000 rubles. The ark of the Torah was donated by Ilya Lipski, the owner of the Shopenas brewery. The first prayer service was held in the new synagogue on Rosh Hashanah in September of 1903 with an official inauguration ceremony held on Hanukkah three months later in December of 1903. Much of the synagogue's northeast façade, however, was only completed much later, in 1914, as we can see in photographs taken in 1914 where the decorative pillars on both sides of the entrance have not yet been installed, as well as in the inscription on the frieze:



Tempel synagogue in Cracow, Choral Synagogue's elder sister although richer and fancier, was built in 1862 and reconstructed in 1894.



The 115th anniversary concert of the Vilnius Choral Synagogue



Shmaryahu Levin (1867-1935)



Elias Zaludkowski (1886-1943)



Mordechai Hershman



Joseph Malovany (1941-)



Noach Zaludkowski (1859-1931)



Shmuel Yatom (1965-)



Abraham Moshe Bernstein
(1866-1932)

„My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations;”: Isaiah 56:7). Many of the city’s commercial and cultural elite prayed at the synagogue. By 1933 the synagogue had a constant team of congregants.

The synagogue is built in Neo-Moorish style with Romantic elements. For a long period in Europe the neo-Moorish style was understood more simply to be “synagogue style.”

Moorish Revival or Neo-Moorish was one of the exotic revival architectural styles adopted by architects in Europe and the Americas which was a sort of rethinking and imitation of mediaeval Spanish, Portuguese, Islamic and Moorish architectural techniques.

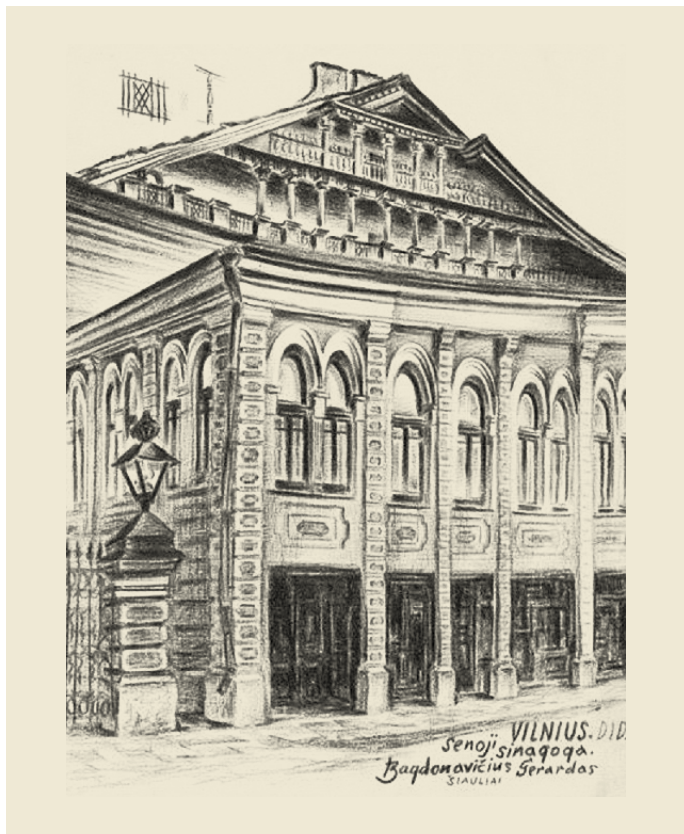
There is the belief the Neo-Moorish style was adopted by Ashkenazim who associated it with the Golden Age of Jewry in Iberia, but this wasn’t the main consideration by Jews and architects who decided to follow this style. Much more likely the selection of Neo-Moorish represented more a kind of pride in Semitism and the legacy of the Orient. Judaic culture, religion and history are among the most ancient in the world and come from the Hebrew forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Neo-Moorish remained popular for synagogue construction in the second half of the 19th century and into the first half of the 20th. Tempel synagogue in Cracow, Choral Synagogue’s elder sister although richer and fancier, was built in 1862 and reconstructed in 1894.

Shmaryahu Levin, a rabbi, orator, teacher and deputy in the first Russia Duma from Vilna Governorate as well as a Zionist figure, writer and publisher in Vilnius, worked as a religious teacher at the Choral Synagogue from 1904 to 1906. From 1905 to 1920 intermittently in Vilnius worked Mordechai Hershman who was attending religious ceremonies only two Sabbaths per month and for the rest of the time he was performing in Europe. World-famous cantors performed at the Choral: Noah Zaludkowski from 1882 to 1884, Abraham Moshe Bernstein from 1893 to 1923 and Elias Zaludkowski from 1923 to 1925. In 2002 Joseph Malovany, born in 1941, was appointed the honorable grand cantor for Vilnius.

Currently and since 2008 Shmuel Yatom, born in 1965, has served and is serving as the main cantor at Choral Synagogue. Yatom means “orphan” in Hebrew. Shmuel Yatom’s great-grandparents were cantors from the Ukraine, as was the case with world-famous cantor and singer Gershon Sirota (the Jewish Caruso; incidentally sirota means “orphan” in Russian) who sang at the Great Synagogue in Vilnius from 1896 to 1905. Yatom’s grandfather Shmuel-Abraham Yatom sang at the Choral Synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and other holy days several times before 1939. There is another member of the dynasty of world-famous cantors with the surname Sirota in Great Britain, whose roots are in the town of Butrimonys in Lithuania.

by Geršonas Taicas

The expert group has issued a set of Recommended Guidelines for the Memorialization of the Great Synagogue of Vilna:



At the behest of the Lithuanian Jewish Community an international Heritage Advisory Group consisting of renowned global experts on Jewish heritage was formed, including:

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, advisor to the director and senior curator of main exhibits at the POLIN Polish Jewish History Museum;

Assumpció Hosta, general secretary of the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ);

Sergey Kanovich, founder of the Maceva NGO and project manager of the Šeduva Jewish Memorial Fund;

Lyudmila Sholokhova, PhD, director, YIVO archive and library;

Sergey Kravtsov, senior research correspondent, Jewish Art Center, Hebrew University;

the Lithuanian Jewish Community was represented by LJC heritage conservation specialist Martynas Užpelkis and architect and designer Victoria Sideraitė-Alon.

Recommended Guidelines for Commemoration of Great Synagogue

- The damage done to the site and to the Jewish community during and after WWII is not repairable and so rebuilding the Great Synagogue and/or any other significant part of the site would convey a false message.
- The recommended approach emphasizes the uniqueness of the site, its history and the current moment.
- The project should focus on conservation and on exposing existing remnants rather than building lofty constructions. The existing kindergarten/school building is not in keeping with the site and should be removed.
- The project should focus on recovering and expressing the prominence and unique meaning of the site in Lithuanian Jewish history and memory.
- The site should communicate its meaning first and foremost through a tangible experience of what has been found and conserved.
- The site should also offer visitors a compelling experience of the site's intangible value through text and multimedia presentations.
- The site should become the focal point for visiting Jewish Vilna, with links to other sites in the city. Through multilingual signposting, printed and digital maps, a way-finding app and a consistent visual language, Jewish sites all over the city could be brought together to form a Jewish heritage route or precinct.
- The site should be designed and built to serve both the local community and tourists.
- The site should be accessible 24 hours per day.
- Use of the site should be non-commercial, consistent with its legal status as a national memorial park.
- The Lithuanian Jewish Community is the historical and legal heir and owner of the site, and therefore concept development, decision-making, physical design and reconstruction must be carried out in full coordination with and with the full approval of the Lithuanian Jewish Community.

Švėkšna Shtetl

Bagel Shop project volunteer and Hugo Šojus Museum specialist in charge of the Švėkšna exhibit Monika Žąsytienė has pleasantly surprised us again with her book “The Švėkšna Jewish Community from the 17th to the 20th Century.” She received the 2015 Bagel Shop tolerance award for her work preserving historical memory and ethnic minority cultural heritage and says it was fate which brought her to Švėkšna. Museum and community work has become an inseparable part of Monika’s life now. One of her main topics is the history of the Jewish community of Švėkšna and preserving its memory. In 2015 Monika successfully implemented her “Let’s Save the Švėkšna Synagogue” project and last fall experts from the company „Pamario restauratorius” began rescue work there, restoring the roof and masonry. Eventually the authentic face of the building, windows, doors and outside and interior decoration will be restored.



Monika Oželytė-Žąsytienė and “Pamario restauratorius” director Aldas Kliukas on the Švėkšna synagogue roof during the reconstruction

In her book she describes phases in the life of the community chronologically up to World War II. It focuses on Jewish residents. Material for the book was collected from the Lithuanian Central State Archive, the archive of the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Department, the Kaunas Regional State Archive and the records of the Saulė Gymnasium in Švėkšna. Other sources include works published earlier, including academic research and the popular press. One of the main stimuli for Monika to publish the book was a series of interviews she conducted with Švėkšna natives Naftali Ziv and his wife Hana.

We present for you consideration some excerpts from the book translated from Lithuanian to English. Let’s remember the Švėkšna shtetl.

In 1695, after the ownership of the Švėkšna manor changed hands and the owner became V. Grotusas, an inventory of the manor was again conducted. Based on this inventory, there were 89 families living in the town, of which 15 families were Jewish. Of these, 7 Jews were merchants because they paid for “booths,” one was listed as a doctor and another as a customs agent. The following surnames are listed: Chaumowicz, Fawisz, Hryszko, Joachim, Jozephowicz, Lazarowicz, Meier, Pluszelewicz, Wulfowicz. ... In 1766 the Švėkšna kahila had 420 members. Josefąs Rozinas indicates 423 members of the Švėkšna kahila paid head-taxes that year (211 men and 212 women). ... In 1826 of the 766 inhabitants of Švėkšna counted, 350 were Jews. Three Jewish communal buildings are also listed.

In 1890 three Jewish men in the town--Ber Shmuel Osherovich, Minel Sheinker (registered at the Veiviržėnai Jewish community but resided in Švėkšna) and Yankel Sheinker--belonged to the second merchants’ guild. According to tax records for 1890 conserved at the Kaunas Regional Archive, Girsh Girshovich maintained a brewery and beer shop in his home, and besides the many retail shops owned by Jews in the town, 11 taverns belonged to Jews (Shmuel Gershonovich, Abraham Yosel, Markus Itsikovich, Fruma Maushovich, Leia Prisman, Zakhariya Romm, Nosel Segal, Freida Shtutsin, Moshe Zakharovich, Ita Zaks, Slova Zelmanovich). Khaya Bloch at her house, plot no. 136 next to the market square, ran a store and rented a wine basement. Leiba Glukh, Dobra Golda Shtutsin and Shmera Shtutsin had shops in the Zaks building next to market square. Peshe Kruksal maintained a store in the house of Yudel Shayovich, Eta Markus in the house of David Markus, Khaja Srolovich in that of Yitzhak Srolovich, Shmuel Urdan had a shop in the Menashevich house, Golda Yudelovich in the Girsh Prisman house and Naftali Ziv had a shop in his own house. Also listed among the taxpayers were kosher butcher Yankel Vulf Gales, pharmacist Ilya Rabinovich and second merchants’ guild merchant Yankel Sheinker’s wife Tsipa Sheinker, who also had a shop. Yokha Kotsen, Minukha Lesk, Ber Osherovich, Khaya Segal, Eida Segal, Feiga Shapiro, Malka Shapiro, Rivka Yankelovich, retired military officer Yankel Yankelovich, Borukh Ber Yafet, Khaya Leia Yudelovich, Bluma Zuzmanovich and Mina Zuzmanovich rented space from the count of Švėkšna.

In 1897, of the 1,897 residents of Švėkšna, 974 were Jews, or 53.5%. ... Later this figure dropped a bit and outmigration by

residents was a main reason for this. ... Jewish residents of Švėkšna spoke out in favor of the Zionist congresses of 1933, 1935 and 1939. Young people influenced by this movement prepared for a return to the Land of Israel and entire families left Lithuania. The Švėkšna Jewish community got along well with the managers of the town's manor estate and they shared economic ties as well: Jews rented land and buildings in the town from the count and bought lumber. Commercial ties bound Jews and Lithuanians together: Lithuanians bought from Jews and Jews bought food products from local farmers. ... The trades of tailor and cobbler were especially popular in Švėkšna. Tailors included men and women. There were also watch makers, hatters, smiths, roofers, leather merchants and leather makers, bakers, butchers... Buying forest products was a profitable trade. ... The subcontractor Srolovich was well known in Švėkšna. The lumber merchant Levitan was exceptionally wealthy in local terms. Jonas Rauktys told how he worked for Levitan moving logs on the river. Buyers set up deals with forest owners for trees and organized labor for felling and moving them by floating them down the Ašva and Minija rivers to Klaipėda and Gargždai where they were worked into lumber. Rauktys said Levitan was an honest man and workers never had a problem getting paid. ... The brother of the religious teacher Yankel Klip also traded in wood, as did Borukh Gershonovich.

In 1910 a map of the real situation in Švėkšna was completed as well as a plan (by the surveyor J. Raupys) for expansion which included the names of home owners and important public enterprises. The map marked 353 plots of land; there were 159 Jewish owners, 16 plots belonged to count Pliateris and his subordinates, and the remainder belong to Lithuanians and German families living in Švėkšna. Two houses of prayer were listed on the map: the Catholic and the Lutheran churches. The synagogue is not marked as such, the building is called the Jewish school. It also shows the Švėkšna People's School, the public bath (Jewish), the communal slaughter house (Jewish), the headquarters of the Švėkšna rural district, count Pliateris's water mill and the Jewish cemetery. ... Based on this map, we can name the largest Jewish real estate



Wooden Švėkšna synagogues. Postcard printed by M. Sieff, beginning of the 20th century. ŠM Švėkšnos exposition, GEK 18035



President of Lithuania Antanas Smetona visited Švėkšna synagogue in 1928. He was greeted by community members and honorary guard of the young Jewish riders. ŠM Švėkšnos exposition, Pg 12802

owners in Švėkšna: Ladon, Grishovich, Glukh, Shmulovich, Yudelovich and Markus.

When the Memel/Klaipėda region was annexed in 1923, the border moved and Švėkšna was no longer a border town. A census was taken that year and it showed Eta Markus and Rozha Oserovich were engaged in the iron trade in Švėkšna; Ona Bartkienė and Antanas Račkauskas maintained wool carding; Abraham Borukhovich, Mala Gita Irshovich, Bent-sel Yudelovich, Lita Ladon and Ber Steikovich had bakeries; Shmuel David Elyashevich, Leizer Yoffe, Beila Yoselovich, Tubiyas Katzelenbogen, Moshe Ziv and Doba Zundelovich traded in manufactured goods and Sroel Markus (on Jewish street) and Abel Zalmanovich had leather workshops.

The central part of the town was densely built and so there were often fires, with exceptional ones in 1858, 1861, 1891, 1903 and 1925. A total of 295 buildings, of which 139 were homes, burnt down on May 15, 1925. A total of 299 families of various ethnicities (808 people) were left homeless, including Lithuanians, Jews and Germans. With both wooden synagogues lost to fire in 1925, the decision was made to build a single brick synagogue to replace them. A residence for the



Cooperative „Nauda“ in 1930s. ŠM Švėkšnos exposition, GEK 12993

rabbi was next to it and it bordered on the plots of lands of the heirs of Epstein (who had a shop in his home next to the main square), Ber Ribkin, and Khaya Gesel; it was also bordered by Siauroji street, Markus's plot and the main market square. The engineer Liubomiras Prosinskis of Tauragė drafted the blueprints for the new synagogue in Švėkšna in 1926. The Lithuanian Interior Ministry approved the plan. In 1928 it was built according to Prosinskis's architectural draft, with the exception of a small cupola which was supposed to be on the roof. That same year Lithuanian president Antanas Smetona attended a ceremony at the Saulė Gymnasium in Švėkšna and also visited the synagogue there.

Based on information in the book "Visa Lietuva" in 1931, there were officially 39 different enterprise, establishment and mercantile sites in Švėkšna. Twelve Jews traded from and had workshops at these locations. Leiba Glukh was engaged in the leather trade and Khana Itikovich, Moshe Yoselovich and Golda Yudelovich traded in manufactured items. Srol Levitan sold lumber and was involved in fuel manufacture, Rebeka Osherovich traded in iron and iron goods and Meyer Pres and Abel Zalmanovich had leather workshops. Abraham Shmulovich and Leiba Shmulovich sold meat, while Hilel Yavner had a water mill in Pagraumenė village. Of the four teahouses operating, one belonged to the Jewish woman G. Struk. The count also ran a brickworks, a milk processing plant and the "Singer Sewing Machine Company" store selling sewing machines, bicycles and musical instruments in Švėkšna. There was also a bakery, a slaughter house, three textile manufacturers, a pharmacy and three sawmills.

There was a separate Jewish primary school operating in Švėkšna in the period between the two world wars (one school was on Jewish street (now J. Maciejausko street no. 8) and another at Mikužio street no. 8 (now Darius ir Girėno street no. 8)) which was run by the Education Ministry. ... The Education Ministry's curriculum was taught in Lithuanian but the children were also taught Hebrew. ... Yankel Fridel Haim Klip taught religion and Tzipa Frishman taught at the school from 1929 to 1933, Seifer taught from 1933 to 1937 and Borukhovich from 1937 to 1940. ...

There is very little information about Jewish organizations which operated before World War I but it is known immigrants from Švėkšna formed at least three associations in New York. According to the American Jewish Historical Society the Younger Brothers of Švėkšna Aid Society (Schwexner Young Brothers Unterstutzung Verein) operated in New York in 1899, and in 1904 the Schwexner Young Brothers Benevolent Society was established. The Sveksner Benevolent Society was also in operation in 1904.

The "List of Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic Citizens Murdered in the Tauragė District" lists 28 residents of the Švėkšna rural district who were murdered, including seven Jews: Moshe Shapiro, Sira Borukhovich, Lekha Borukovich,

Aida Ladon, Bluma Itsikovich, Zeld Luriya and a younger girl Lurija (whose name isn't known.)

The mass murder of the Jews of the town of Švėkšna was different from most mass murders in Lithuania. Švėkšna fell into a 25-kilometer-wide border zone instituted by the military and security structures of Nazi Germany which was supposed to be "cleansed of Communists, Party activists, Jews and other radical elements." By the end of June in 1941 mass murders of Jews had been carried out in Gargždai, Kretinga and Palanga, and the "cleansing" of towns in the border zone began. Holocaust survivor S. Osherovich remembers: "Our Torah scrolls, books, prayer books and tallises were thrown on the ground and they ordered the Jews to walk on them, to tread on them for several hours, performing all kinds of gymnastics moves with their hands, to crawl on the ground, to dance, and for each failure to perform the people were beaten."

Jewish women with children and those men who remained and hadn't been sent to labor camps were put into the territory by the synagogue surrounded by barbed wire between Siauroji and Jewish streets (up to six families were put in a single house): this was the Švėkšna "ghetto"... September 20th of 1941 in Parubežis forest, near Inkakliai village more than 330 Švėkšna Jews were murdered. Documents conserved at the Lithuanian Central State Archive confirm that between August 16 and August 25 the police chief had compiled "lists of Jewish items to be returned," which documents how Jews property was distributed to local residents: mainly Jewish property was taken "into protection," "exchanged for debt," "for labor done," "given back" and so on.

Two commissions operated at different times to inventory, assess the value of and sell the property of the Jews of Švėkšna. ... The first commission which operated in October and November of 1941 sold property worth almost 8,000 Reichmarks to residents of the rural district. The second commission ended its work on January 14, 1942. About 3,292 Reichmarks were collected from items sold then. About 400 residents of the Švėkšna and Veiviržėnai rural districts acquired Jewish property, with the main purchasers from the villages of the Švėkšna and Inkakliai aldermanships. ... With no Jews left in Švėkšna, other residents of Švėkšna moved into their homes, as did inhabitants of surrounding villages. At the end of 1941 or the beginning of 1942 a census was taken of the residents of Švėkšna (which didn't include students from surrounding villages who were residing in Švėkšna) which shows the town then had 900 residents, none of them Jewish. In the census what had been Jewish street is now listed as Trumpioji (Short) street.

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Bagel Shop Café Celebrates Third Birthday!

The Bagel Shop Café which opened three years ago has maintained and revived the Litvak culinary tradition and legacy. Located inside the Lithuanian Jewish Community at Pylimo street no. 4 in Vilnius, bagels are made right there according to an old family recipe, and the café also makes fresh challa bread every Friday to celebrate the Sabbath. The café also celebrates various Jewish holidays and holy days. Chief cook Riva Portnaja has dedicated so much of her time and energy to making the shop a success and to preserving culinary tradition. The idea of an actual Bagel Shop arose back in 2014 from the Bagel Shop project, aimed at attracting volunteers and the broader society into fighting hate, combating anti-Semitism and fostering tolerance. Now the smell of freshly-cooked bagels in the corridors of the LJC has become customary. The Bagel Shop Café's main offering is still the so-called Litvak bagel with lox, cheese and other spreads. Although bagels are immensely popular in the West, and especially in New York



and Montreal, with millions made by bagel-making enterprises in the United States alone, the LJC's kosher bagel enterprise is something special in Lithuania, educating the public about bagel culture and cuisine. And so far the LJC's Bagel Shop Café is an immense success both locally and according to feedback received from travellers from around the world who have visited, tasted and enjoyed.

LJC projects director Dovilė Rūkaitė said that while the Bagel Shop Café is a great success with clients, it isn't yet financially self-sustaining and still needs financial support from the LJC. The setting is important--Vilnius--and customers are buying nostalgia as well as bagels. Usually the café sells about 100 bagels on weekdays and 200 on Sundays. The Bagel Shop Café also feeds members of the Vilnius Jewish Religious Community who arrive daily for a hot breakfast. Every morning there is a religious Jew who arrives with the cook to insure everything is kosher in the kitchen, from lighting the stove to dividing the challa dough, checking the salad and making sure everything is in keeping with kosher rules. Visitors are offered kosher shakshuka, soup, salads, bagels, cakes and everything else which can be made in the small kitchen space by the humble team of just five employees. As interest grows in kosher eating, the Community is beginning to consider seriously opening a kosher restaurant as well, although no concrete plans or dates have been set yet.

In February the Bagel Shop Café celebrated its third anniversary showcasing Israeli street food and food culture with falafel in pita bread and sabih with Israeli spices. Israel's ambassador to Lithuania Amir Maimon graciously attended and told the birthday celebrants about the food and ferment of the Israeli street. Rabbi Sholom Ber Krinsky explained the essence of preparing and eating kosher, followed by Jewish melodies and hymns performed by Choral Synagogue cantor Shmuel Yatom.

For those who haven't visited the Bagel Shop Café yet (but who have managed to get a copy of our newsletter!), stop by weekdays and Sundays and give it a try!

BAGEL SHOP



א קלייט פון בייגל
beigelių kroutuvė

WORKING HOURS

I-IV 11:00 - 20:00
V 11:00 - 17:00
VI SHABBAT/CLOSED
VII 12:00 - 17:00



Phone 8 683 86 894. E-mail kavine@lzb.lt

Jewish Scouts Hike to Synagogue in Žiežmariai



The Lithuanian Jewish Community invited Jewish scouts for a winter hike on February 17. The delegation left by train for Žasliai where they were welcomed by the town alderman and local students. The scouts presented the community and the school with a gift, the Vilnius ghetto diary of Yitzhak Rudashevski.

The hike began through Strošiūnai Forest where the scouts learned how to build a fire and had a snack. Hikers later visited the Jewish mass murder site in Strošiūnai Forest where everyone laid a stone in memory of the victims. The hike concluded at the Žiežmariai Cultural Center where the scouts, along with Kaišiadorys regional administration head Vytenis Tomkus, they raised and viewed the traditional Žiežmariai haShomer haTzair scouting flag, generously lended for the occasion by the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum.

The scouts visited the Žiežmariai currently undergoing restoration, where Kaišiadorys historian Vytautas Budvytis gave everyone a tour and told them about the relicts of the Jewish past in the town of Žiežmariai.

Litvak scouting has a long tradition in Lithuania until the Holocaust and there were thousands of scouts. Jewish scouting stopped after the Holocaust, making the revival, Sabbath in the Forest in 2018, an important milestone. The goal of the renewed organization is to include religious Jewish children, secular Jewish children and non-Jewish children in Jewish scouting activities.





In Memoriam

Composer Anatolijus Šenderovas (1945-2019)

How does one become a creator of music? And will there ever be a good answer to this question? Everyone studies under the same teachers, learns the same things, hears the same music playing around them, and so canons are born which lodge deeply in our minds and from which everyone draws. But all of our destinies are different: one person who is accustomed to being guided by mentors becomes unable to disentangle himself from these canons and continues on exclusively in that which he has learned and knows, while another, eager to show his courage, tramples upon everything which was sacred to the generation of his teachers, that which he was taught. And only a very few take

to speaking in their own voice, unconcerned whether this conforms to fashion or if there is a demand for it, unconcerned if this clashes with the truths and rules invented by someone else.

Anatolijus Šenderovas was one of those few who travel off on their own path. He was free to accomplish the goals he set for himself without trying to prove himself to anyone, he created that which he felt he must create. He immortalized in his work his experience and that which he held dear. Perhaps that's why his music is so recognizable and why it cannot be confused with anyone else's.

Šenderovas's work clearly expressed Jewish cultural narratives: the unbreakable chain between past and present, a tragic history, faith in destiny. These were things close to his heart and they inspired him. Nonetheless, in providing a clearly ethnic subtext to his music, he did not choose the facile path by simply quoting or imitating someone. He gave birth to his own unique vision of Litvak musical style which did not exist hitherto but which he created for himself and others. Just as Grigoriy Kanovich placed his imaginary characters in the environments of shtetls which no longer existed and created Litvak phenotypes which became completely real to us, seamlessly merging with our conception of the life of our forefathers, so was Šenderovas's music heard by us in ethnic colors, from

now on adorning the concept of Jewish musical expression. And this is exactly the miracle of art, when the artist's fantasy becomes real.

Šenderovas earned the respect of his colleagues and the love of his audience as well as great renown. The cello was his creative Muse not only because his father was an outstanding cellist, but also due to his friendship with David Gerling, a fellow thinker and promoter of his work. Premieres of his work were conducted by Saulius Sondeckis and Juozas Domarkas, and a mutual understanding, sincere friendship and a creative partnership connected him to them throughout life. He was equally as open and friendly with many other performers of his work, whose ranks were constantly renewed by new names, by representatives of newer generations, one after another. He always found a common language, a common set of values with them.

Music has this wonderful quality, the ability to be born anew every time. Šenderovas's music has been played, is being played and will be played without interruption in the future. In that sense the composer himself will remain with us and he will communicate with us through his music. We are forever grateful to him for this gift he has bestowed upon us.

*Professor Dr. Leonidas Melnikas,
pianist, organist, musicologist*

Uri Leviatan's Book From Hand to Hand

Haifa University professor Uri Leviatan's book is a moving autobiographical retelling of his early childhood against the backdrop of the Holocaust based on surviving historical documents and people's testimonies. Isaak Leviatan, an extremely well-known gynecologist in



From left: Uri Leviatan's wife Rachel, editor Dalija Epšteinaitė, translator Victoria Sideraitė-Alon, author Uri Leviatan, journalist Birutė Vyšniauskaitė.

pre-World War II Lithuania, was also an active public figure, whose grandson Uri and his son and daughter-in-law were imprisoned in the Kaunas ghetto in 1941. Uri was rescued from the ghetto and transferred from one guardian to another at least seven times. He doesn't have very clear memories of his shattered childhood. Later in life he decided to explore his own roots and embarked on what he called a detective story. As a Jewish orphan in Lithuania and later at the post-war Sanhedria orphanage in Israel he was registered under a different name, and he called his stay at the ultra-religious Sanhedria "almost a kidnapping." His book also tells the story of his grandparents who were seriously oppressed by the Soviets in two different periods: first in 1941 and then later in 1952. The senior Isaak Leviatan died in Siberia.

This is the first in a series of books documenting unique Litvak biographies called ARKA.

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Schedule of services at the Choral Synagogue in Vilnius, Pylimo st. no. 39:

- ▶ workdays from 8:30 A.M. to 9:30 A.M.
- ▶ Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.
- ▶ Sunday from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 P.M.

Synagogue telephone: (8 5) 261 2523

Vilnius Jewish Cemetery (Sudervės way No. 28, Vilnius) open: workdays and Sunday from 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.; closed on Saturday.

Telephone: (8 5) 250 54 68

On the cover – President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė visiting YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

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