

# BAGGEL SHOP

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We made it to summer!

I'd like to introduce myself. I am Radvilė. I am working on a doctoral degree at Vilnius University and am doing research on strange and archaic forest plants called lycopods or club-mosses. I write about other things as well. In my subconscious I am closely connected with the Jewish community of the village of Ylakai (Yelok in Yiddish). My grandmother Marijona Lengvenytė also suffered together with the Jews in the summer of 1941. She didn't know why. They let her go.

This issue of the Bagel Shop includes the usual news round-up and a statement by Lithuanian Jewish Community chairwoman about the restoration of citizenship to Litvaks. In the context of the March of the Living I invite you to remember or learn about Dr. Rachel Margolis, and the non-invasive cemetery archaeology conducted by Dr. Caroline Sturdy Colls. New in this issue is the Rabbinate page, which I'm hoping will become a regular feature.

Did you know Raimondas Savickas is holding painting classes at the LJC? What about the unusual graphic work of Valius Staknys? And there's much more! I invite you to read through the entire issue.

Your ideas, comments and suggestions for upcoming issues are very welcome, just send me an email at [radvile@lzb.lt](mailto:radvile@lzb.lt)

*Radvilė*

# NEWS AT A GLANCE

**February 4, 2016** A new kosher food outlet, the Bagel Shop Café, opens at the Lithuanian Jewish Community in Vilnius. Initial offerings consist of bagels cooked on site according to the rules of Judaism and kosher sweets.

**February 13, 2016** Valdas Balčiūnas awarded title of Person of Tolerance of the Year for 2015 by the Sugihara Foundation "Diplomats for Life." He received the award for significant work in commemorating the Jews of Žagarė, Lithuania and renewing contacts with Jews from Žagarė who live around the world. He received a medal created by the sculptor Edmundas Frėjus and a diploma. The son of Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara, Nobuki, presented the award personally.

**February 14** A chess tournament by the Rositsan Elite Chess and Checkers Club was held at the Lithuanian Jewish Community to commemorate the day of the restoration of Lithuanian independence in the early 20th century. On April 3 the club held a championship open to the public and on April 10 a tournament dedicated to the memory of the chess master Donatas Lapienis.

**February 15** Rabbi Shmuel Arieh Levin with eight other members of his religious community from the Argentine Rabbinate of the Republic of Argentina of the Jewish Community of Buenos Aires and the Federation of Israelite Communities of Argentina visited the Panevėžys Jewish Community. The purpose of their visit was to learn about the life of the small Jewish community living there now, to learn more of its history and to hear about the famous Ponovezh yehsiva and its founder Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, the Ponovezher Rov.

**February 17** The 24th meeting in the Destinies series of seminars and lectures took place at the Lithuanian Jewish Community called "Jewish Motifs in the Works of Writer and Art Historian Dr. Kristina Sabaliauskaitė." Teacher and essayist Vytautas Toleikis moderated the meeting and LJC deputy chairwoman Maša Grodnikienė was the organizer, served as MC and introduced Sabaliauskaitė in person to the audience.

**February 18** The Lithuanian National Museum launched the exhibit "YIVO in Vilnius: The Legend Begins." Exhibit curators: Dr. Lara Lempertienė, Dr. Giedrė Jankevičiūtė. The exhibit both celebrated the 90th anniversary of the Jewish research organization and shed light on its beginnings in the city of Vilnius. It included material conserved in Lithuanian state archives and collections on the history and activities of YIVO which hadn't been exhibited before. The exhibit was first shown at the Galicia Jewish Museum in Cracow, Poland.

**February 19** Issue number 4 of Brasta, an almanac of Jewish history and culture, presented at the Vilnius Jewish Library. This issue was in English and Lithuanian and dealt with the topic of the origins of Jewish humanitarian medicine and Vilnius doctors. Brasta is a publication published by the Vilnius Jewish Library's Charity and Welfare Foundation and describes itself as an almanac of Jewish culture and history which publishes popular, literary and theoretical works.

**February 26** Lithuanian translation of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel's "The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man" (1951) launched at Vilnius Book Fair, translated by Asta Leskauskaitė and published by Katalikų pasaulio leidiniai [Catholic

World Publications]. Heschel (1907-1972) became a rabbi at age 16 and finished the Vilna Mathematics and Natural Science Gymnasium before going on to study under some of the greatest Jewish teachers in Germany. He was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to Poland in October of 1938. He fled to Britain weeks before the Nazi invasion of Poland, and then went on to the United States in early 1940, where he became one of the most important and respected Jewish thinkers of the mid-20th century. He was a member of the Jung-Vilne group of writers in Vilnius.

**February 26** BNS reported Cultural Heritage Department director Diana Varnaitė initiated registration of the old Jewish cemetery on Olandų str. in Vilnius as a cultural heritage site. Back in 2014 the 7.7-hectare territory was registered as the Užupis Jewish Cemetery.

**February 29** The two newly-hired rabbis for Vilnius and Lithuania, Samson Daniel Izakson and Kalev Krelin, were introduced at a special meeting at the Lithuanian Jewish Community. Guests included foreign diplomats, members of the Lithuanian parliament, Catholic officials, representatives of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture and the heads of regional Jewish communities.

**February 29** Launch of the book “Lietuvos sporto klubas “Makabi” 1916-2016” [The Lithuanian Athletics Club Makabi, 1916-2016] at the Lithuanian Jewish Community. Makabi Club president Semionas Finkelšteinas led the presentation. The book describes the origins of the 100-year-old athletics club, its history in the interwar period, the resurrection of the club and its activities in independent Lithuania.

**March 3** The Israeli Cultural Center of the Israeli embassy in Vilnius attended the International Study Days exhibition in Vilnius. Embassy first secretary Anne Keinan, residing in Belarus, and Israeli Cultural Center director Ray Keinan spoke with visitors.

**March 3** The Lithuanian UNESCO Commission gallery hosted the launch of Yves Plasseraud’s book “Irena Veisaitė: Tolerance and Involvement.” Professor Veisaitė, the author and professor Leonidas Donskis spoke at the event.

**March 4-6** The annual Kaziukas Fair in Vilnius included a Jewish shtetl this year. The model village included traditional Jewish crafts, food and literature. The Jewish song and dance ensemble “Fayerlakh” and pupils from the Saulėtekis School in Vilnius performed a concert there. The Bagel Shop Café was one of two food vendors there.

**March 10** The Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum’s Tolerance Center showed the documentary film “Farewell, Herr Schwarz” aka “Schnee von Gestern” (2013, Germany, Israel) and introduced the film director, Yael Reuveny. The film is about brother and sister Feiv’ke and Michla who plan to meet at the Łódź, Poland train station after the war ends, but Feiv’ke never showed up. Fifty years later Reuveny traced how three generations of her family were haunted by the meeting that never happened.

**March 10** The Lithuanian Jewish Student Union Cinema Club held a free showing of the film “Kaddish” (2006) with a short talk by Rabbi Izakson, who knows the film director. Kaddish is the story of Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef Zilber (1917-2003), a Russian, later Israeli Haredi rabbi and a leader of the Russian baal teshuva movement, author of several books, religious authority.

**March 16** The Cultural Heritage Department announces legal protection applied to a commemorative cultural heritage site, the old Jewish cemetery in Klaipėda on Sinagogų str., 1.3 hectares in extent, which opened in the early 19th century. Only part of the cemetery survives.

**March 22** Forty-fifth anniversary concert of the “Fayerlakh” Jewish song and dance ensemble held at the Russian Drama Theater in Vilnius. The “Shtetl Once Upon a Time” program included the entire ensemble of performers, from children to senior citizens, performing songs in Yiddish and dances with a fun narrative.

**March 23** The Lithuanian daily newspaper “Lietuvos žinios” reported the International Commission for Assessing the Crimes of the Soviet and Nazi Occupational Regimes in Lithuania meeting in mid-March decided to examine assets stolen from Jews by the Rosenberg squad and meticulously recorded by the Nazis. Commission chairman Emanuelis Zingeris said Nojus Feigelmanas’s book “Lietuvos inkunabulai” [“Lithuanian Incanabula”] contains information about rare items from the Strashun library in Vilnius. The Commission resumed work in 2013 after resignations in protest of Lithuanian prosecutors targeting Jewish partisans and Holocaust survivors for alleged war crimes.

**March 24** Purim holiday celebrated at Choral Synagogue in Vilnius. Simas Levinas, chairman of the Lithuanian Jewish Religious Community, greeted everyone on the festive occasion recalling the rescue of the Jews from Haman the Amalekites in ancient Persia. “History has seen more than one Haman who sought to destroy all the Jews--Stalin, Hitler, now ISIS--but no one has succeeded in doing this,” he said. Rabbi Izakson said that “only during Purim is it remembered that salvation comes out of affliction. And it happens often in life that we think things will go one way, but it happens in a different way.”

**March 25** Ceremony in Kaunas to commemorate over 2,000 children killed during the Children’s Aktion [mass murder operation] in the Kaunas ghetto on March 27 and 28, 1944.

**March 25** Kaunas Jewish Community chairman Žakas Gercas and Kaunas city municipal representatives visit the Jewish cemetery in Slobodka (Vilijampolė) and the Ninth Fort. Agreement was reached for a municipal corporation to set up an information stand near the entrance in April to provide information about the cemetery, and to ban motor vehicle traffic, smoking, walking dogs and lighting fires. The city will also refurbish the area around the mass murder site at the Seventh Fort. The parties also discussed restoring a monument in the

Jewish graveyard on Radvilėnų highway commemorating the first victims of the Holocaust. They announced a commemorative plaque would be placed on the building at A. Mapu street no. 18 in Kaunas to mark the site of the union of Jewish soldiers who fought in battles for Lithuanian independence which had its headquarters there.

**March 31** The Tolerance Center of Vilna Gaon Museum opened and hosted a photography exhibit called "From the Unknown to the Unknown: World War II Refugees in Lithuania" from the National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum and launched the exhibit catalog.

**April 4-6** Representatives from 13 Israeli food production companies sought partners in Lithuania. Meetings with 50 Lithuanian companies were arranged. The Israeli embassy in Lithuania and Lithuanian partners facilitated the meetings and a business forum for the parties to discuss prospects for Lithuanian entry into the Israeli food market.

**April 5** The National Art Gallery launches the catalog "Litvak Art in Private Lithuanian Collections." The large album includes works from over a 150-year span of time, beginning with Litvak artists in the mid-19th century and concluding with contemporary artists working within the Litvak traditions of art.

**April 6** The Lithuanian Jewish Community hosted a press conference to inform the public of a joint project with the Order of Malta to aid Lithuanian Righteous Gentiles. Lithuanian president Dalia Grybauskaitė and German president Joachim Gauck threw their support behind the initiative. Baron Christian Freiherr von Bechtolsheim, the ambassador of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta to Lithuania, and Lithuanian Jewish Community chairwoman Faina Kukliansky spoke to reporters and von Bechtolsheim handed Kukliansky a giant symbolic check for 123,000 euros. The money was collected through a benefit concert in Germany to help aging Righteous Gentiles in Lithuania. Currently 87 Righteous Gentiles live in Lithuania and the Lithuanian Jewish Community seeks to ensure they are cared for in their elder years.

**April 7** Two groups of young rabbis from yeshivas in Canada, USA, Great Britain, France, Israel and Japan visited the Panevėžys Jewish Community to learn about Jewish life in Panevėžys before the war and now.

**April 11** Memorial plaque unveiled in Klaipėda (Memel) to commemorate town resident and early Zionist activist David Wolffsohn, creator of the flag of the State of Israel. Wolffson's teacher Isaac Rūlf was earlier commemorated there.

**April 14** Catalog of mobile painting and photography exhibit by contemporary Lithuanians "Zakhor: Remember. Topography of Images of Jewish Vilna" launched at Lithuanian Jewish Community, prepared and edited by exhibit curators Linas Liandzbergis, Elke-Vera Kotowski and Gabrielė Žaidytė.

**April 14** Israeli embassy and Makabi Lithuanian athletics club held reception to celebrate Lithuanian Makabi athletes' victories at the World Maccabiah Games in Israel and the European Maccabi Games.

**April 16** Lithuanian Jewish Community chairwoman visited

India and talked about areas of cooperation with representatives of the Jewish community in Mumbai. She visited synagogues in India's largest city, met local Jews and learned about their history and way of life.

**April 19** The Destinies series of lectures and meetings featured the musical group American Virtuosi in a concert called "Music: The Best Bridge between Peoples." The Borowsky family band performed classics by Gershwin and Poulencq and a potpourri of popular Jewish melodies.

**April 23-29** Lithuanian Jewish Community and regional communities celebrated Passover.

**April 27** Architecture experts, cultural heritage protection specialists, restorers and engineers visited the oldest standing wooden synagogue in Lithuania, in Pakruojis in a trip organized by the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture to find the best way to heat and restore the aging building.

**April 29** Dutch pianist Marcel Worms brought prewar Jewish compositions back to life in a concert at the Lithuanian Jewish Community. Many of the composers were murdered during the Holocaust. He performed works by Rosy Wertheim, Erwin Schulhoff, Gideon Klein, Alexander Tansman, Szymon Laks, Leo Smit, Dick Kattenburg, George Gershwin and Anatolijus Šenderovas. Dutch diplomat and Righteous Gentile Jan Zwartendijk's son and daughter, Robert Zwartendijk and Edith Jes, attended the concert and spoke about their father who helped rescue at least 2,000 Jews in Lithuania by issuing end-visas. Japan's ambassador to Lithuania Toyoei Shigeeda and Dutch ambassador to Lithuania Bert van der Lingen also attended.

**May 5** The Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum hosted a seminar called "Hate: A Failure of the Imagination" at the museum's Tolerance Center.

**May 9** Exhibition of works by pupils at the Rožynas Pregymnasium in Panevėžys, Lithuania, on the Holocaust as part of a project funded by the Goodwill Foundation called "A Bridge between the Past and Present" to commemorate the Holocaust in the Panevėžys region. Panevėžys Jewish Community and Rožynas Pregymnasium celebrated 10th anniversary of their cooperation.

**May 9** Presentation of Ruth Reches' wordbook for beginning Lithuanian students of Hebrew at the Lithuanian Jewish Community.

**May 12** The Israeli embassy decides to celebrate Israeli Independence Day with a charity event and visits Save the Children centers in cities around Lithuania.

**May 19** Start of work ceremony at the wooden synagogue in Žiežmariai. One of only 14 surviving wooden synagogues in Lithuania, work is underway to repair the exterior and interior of the building.

**May** The Lithuanian magazine Reitingai [Ratings] named the Sholem Aleichem ORT Gymnasium among the top schools in Lithuania. In the category of gymnasia which don't apply selection criteria to potential new students, Sholem Aleichem took first place in Vilnius and third in Lithuania. The school ranked in the top ten list for all schools in Lithuania and in the top five for all schools in all categories in Vilnius.

## QUESTION FOR THE LJC

**This time we asked LJC staff and members about the items they have at home which they treasure.**



**Simas Levinas**, LJC Social Center director, Vilnius Jewish Religious Community chairman

My father served in the Lithuanian military in about 1938. I have a photograph of him in uniform. This photograph is very dear to me. Through some miracle my grandparents' silver candlestick holders also stayed in our family. On the evening of the Sabbath they were lit during the ceremonial dinner. After World War II started, my parents fled, survived and when they came back, found them where they had left them. The candlestick holders were not sold or stolen. My mother gave them to our family, and we gave them to our son. Now the candlestick holders are at my granddaughter's.



**Gennady Kofman**, Panevėžys Jewish Community chairman

What's really important to me is a collected archive about the Panevėžys Jewish community. I have been collecting it for fifteen years. I hope to publish a book for future generations which would serve as a primary source for the history of the Panevėžys Jewish community. There are a number of bibliographic publications about famous Jewish industrialists, doctors and attorneys from Vilnius and Kaunas. Panevėžys doesn't have that yet. But, after all, Panevėžys is the capital of Aukštaitija whose Jewish history is extraordinary, but still uninvestigated. This hard work requiring careful attention occupies the greater part of my life.

**We invite you to pose a question to LJC members, administration and staff. Send your query to Bagel Shop, Pylimo street No. 4, LT-01117 Vilnius or by email to [radvile@lzb.lt](mailto:radvile@lzb.lt).**

### **Dear members of the Lithuanian Jewish Community and Litvaks living abroad,**

I would like to explain in an understandable way what the current situation is regarding the **Lithuanian law on citizenship and its provisions** affecting those who seek to restore Lithuanian citizenship without renouncing their current citizenship, whether that be of the Republic of South Africa, Israel, the United States, Great Britain or another country.



To begin, we are not at war, although it almost seems like a war for the Jews in South Africa, and the great majority of Jews in other countries enjoy a higher standard of living than we do. It is also clear the Lithuanian law on restoration of citizenship was not written especially for Jews. We, the Lithuanian Jewish Community, care about the Jews of the world and their legitimate aspirations to restore Lithuanian citizenship. The first question which undoubtedly comes up is, when exactly did Jews lose that citizenship?

Jews who left Lithuania with Lithuanian passports before the war, and those who were deported from Lithuania to con-

centration camps, and those who were deported to Siberia did not renounce Lithuanian citizenship voluntarily. In fact they formally lost it when Lithuania became independent again as people of non-Lithuanian ethnic origin (it turns out Jews who come from Lithuania are not considered people of Lithuanian origin, and are not members of Lithuanian émigré organizations abroad), and moreover, some of them have "repatriated" from Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Constitutional Court found in 2006 that the law on citizenship then in force, which precluded those who had "repatriated" [taken another citizenship] from acquiring Lithuani-

an citizenship, was unconstitutional. In 2010 the Lithuanian parliament sought to restore social justice by providing people who had left Lithuania, i.e., Jews, but not just Jews, easier conditions for restoring Lithuanian citizenship. The parliament strove to make the law more understandable and easier to implement. Unfortunately obstacles have been encountered in its implementation.

It has become clear the Lithuanian interior minister, who executes the laws adopted by the parliament, did so in a manner not intended by legislators, and in a manner other than what the actual law prescribed. The Lithuanian Migration Department, which is directly subordi-

nate to the Interior Ministry, began to demand from applicants for Lithuanian citizenship things which are not called for in the law. To make it simpler, I'll provide a few examples. The life of a girl who was born right before World War II was saved by throwing her over the fence of the Kaunas ghetto. A Lithuanian man adopted her as per earlier agreement. Now, this woman, a victim of the Nazis and a Holocaust survivor, must explain in fine detail why she, having survived the ghetto, saved and raised by strangers, might have felt "real fear" and therefore left Lithuania. Her spouse, born in Russia because his parents were evacuated and thus not murdered, was told he must explain why they left occupied Lithuania, since Jews were allowed to leave the USSR. I wonder if ethnic Lithuanians wouldn't have left at that time, had they been allowed to leave the USSR. A person who fled an occupied territory is being told he must explain why he left, and whether his leaving constitutes "withdrawal." Some left, some didn't, some lived, others were shot. The father of a two-year-old girl receives Lithuanian citizenship under law and applies for restoration of his daughter's citizenship, but the girl must explain why her great-grandfather left Lithuania for South Africa, because her citizenship is supposed to be restored under a different law... A woman whose interwar passport listed her ethnicity as "little Jew-girl" was successful in showing she fled anti-Semitism, while others whose passports didn't contain that sort of ethnic epithet were not successful in claiming they left because of anti-Semitism. I think this is just absurd, I can't see it as anything else. A woman who was born in Vilnius wants to restore her Lithuanian citizenship, but when she was young she went to study in Germany, before the war, met an Indian man there, and came back to Vilnius, to her parents, who were later murdered in Ponar. She gave birth to a son and they returned to Germany to continue their education. Now she has to explain why she couldn't come back from Germany after 1936? And why should a Jewish girl with a newborn baby come back to Lithuania, where after a short while both her parents were murdered?

At times these requirements for applicants appear cynical and insulting. What's the solution? I'm skeptical about

parliamentary supervision. The parliament can't supervise everything. I think if the implementation of the Lithuanian law on citizenship is out of sync with the spirit and intent of the law, the law should be made more explicit so that even the interior minister might understand it. Or we need to appoint interior ministers for whom we don't need to amend laws, the kind who know how to read and understand the law as it is written.

We are speaking of those who left in the period between the two world wars. We know the great contributions made by Lithuanian Jews to the creation of the Lithuanian state and know that the Lithuanian Jewish Community was exterminated and had no time to flee, that almost everyone was murdered except for those who managed to hide or were rescued, or by some miracle survived the concentration camps. After the extermination of the Jews of Lithuania, to make this sort of decision today on Litvaks who want to come back to Lithuania, to close the door on them, to prevent the Lithuanian Jewish Community from welcoming into our ranks Litvaks who are citizens of another state and who want to become Lithuanian citizens—this is a stupid and short-sighted political decision. This decision is impossible. Of the Jews who lived in Lithuania before the war, only 5% survived. I want the minister or any other politician to explain to me how someone could be part of that 5% not having left Lithuania. If a Litvak cannot explain all of the circumstances surrounding his leaving the country, he is refused citizenship. This is truly an unjust and unfair political decision. The individual who applies for restoration of Lithuanian citizenship becomes a hostage to the minister's knowledge of history and his attitude towards Jews. We are not complaining about your average public servant, but the law formulated by the interior minister. This is a policy, and inappropriate public administration. I feel that after consideration by the parliament's European Affairs Committee, the interior minister must immediately make a decision, because people have been waiting for three to four years now.

The Lithuanian Jewish Community is a small one today. Jews from Russia make up the majority, whom we love

as our own. Would it be a bad thing if the community's ranks grew to include people from Lithuania now living in South Africa, the USA and other countries? Do the goals of our community really differ from those of our country, from Lithuania's goals?

There's no need to fear-monger that a Jew who receives Lithuanian citizenship will immediately ask for restoration of property. Those who left before 1940 mostly sold their property. Those who had their property illegally seized and who were not citizens of Lithuania by the end of 2001, the deadline set in the law for property restoration, in accordance with the findings of the full collegium of the Lithuanian Supreme Court, don't have the right to even file an appeal with the courts for extending the deadline for submitting applications. In other words, the door has been closed for that for all time, but that doesn't mean the world Jewish organizations are abandoning the issue or will ever do so. On June 22 and 23 two commissions will meet at the Lithuanian Government to address the issue, an international commission formed to work on this problem and the World Jewish Restitution Organization. The commissions are not considering citizenship, but are working on issues surrounding the occupations, the Holocaust and property restitution.

I must apologize to the new interior minister. This is not personal. But we can't push everything onto the courts. An individual only goes to court after a decision is issued by the interior minister which he believes violates his rights. The minister's decision comes first, the court verdict only after that. The worst thing is that our country's opinion on the issue of citizenship changes constantly and completely unpredictably, without any attention paid to the history of the country or the suffering of its citizens. Lithuania is not India, where in Bombay [Mumbai] alone more than 20 million people live. Lithuania is a small state plagued by the misfortunes of history. Why aren't we concerned with making its future a dignified one?

*Faina Kukliansky  
Lithuanian Jewish Community chair-  
woman*

# LITHUANIA HAS A RABBI AGAIN... IN FACT, TWO!

For more than six months the Lithuanian Jewish Community and Lithuania didn't have an official rabbi. After the LJC and the Lithuanian Jewish Religious Community announced a search, more than thirty rabbis from the USA, Germany, Great Britain, Israel, Belarus, Latvia, Russia and other countries around the world expressed an interest.

Some of the candidates were invited to the LJC for a face-to-face meeting. After the interviews we had the idea of doing away with the office of Chief Rabbi, after all, Judaism itself doesn't have that sort of a hierarchy and its foreign to the traditions of the Gaon and Litvaks. Instead, we thought it might be better to hire a team of two rabbis who could assist one another and provide more services to the religious community, such as organizing educational activities, getting more youth involved at synagogue, organizing educational seminars on Torah and traditions (*kolel Torah*), open a Sunday school for children, teach kosher practices, prepare converts, perform bris, wedding rituals, perform registration of births and marriages at synagogue, provide certificates of Jewish origin and set up a *mikvah*.

Rabbis Kalev Krelin and Samson Daniel Isaakson (Shimson Daniel Izakson) were appointed rabbis of the LJC and the Vilnius Choral Synagogue who will also serve other Lithuanian Jewish religious communities.

Rabbi Krelin was born in 1969 and studied at Moscow State University. In 1988 he made *aliyah* and studied at a variety of yeshivas and at the famous Aran in Jerusalem. He taught at the Copenhagen Jewish Academy, served as community rabbi in Germany and was the rabbi of Young Israel congregation in the USA. Since 2012 he has lived in Riga with his family and

served as rabbi there. Currently he is doing rabbinical work in Latvia and Lithuania.

Rabbi Isaakson was born in 1987 and entered the Torat Chaim yeshiva in Moscow at the age of 14. He made *aliyah* to Israel in 2005 and continued his religious education in Jerusalem at the Ateret Israel yeshiva. After receiving his rabbinical certificate he was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Vitebsk, Belarus. The Conference of European Rabbis awarded him in recognition of his achievements in working with youth. He and his family live in Vilnius.

Conference of European Rabbis president Pinchas Goldschmit and Torat Chaim yeshiva director Moshe Lebel have blessed the future work of Rabbis Krelin and Isaakson in Lithuania.

*The rabbinical team will provide respons to all questions of concern in life. The Bagel Shop newsletter will also feature a new section where the rabbis will share their wisdom. Stay tuned!*

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## ***Dear members of the Lithuanian Jewish Community, Jews of Lithuania and people of Lithuania,***

I would like to share my joy with you and my excitement and thoughts as Rabbi Izakson and I begin working in Lithuania. It is a great honor and at the same time a great responsibility to do this work. And it is also, for me, a very interesting challenge.

I had a very interesting career before coming to Lithuania. I'm not just a qualified rabbi, I also have degrees in physics and mathematics. So for me, work is also a sort of solution to an interesting problem. That's how I see my road in serving the Creator. I have experience as a teacher because I worked at a Jewish school in Copenhagen. Later



Kalev Krelin. Photo: Eugenijus Barzdžius

I became the community rabbi in the very interesting city of Heidelberg in Germany, famous for its university. Later for many years I worked as a rabbi at a synagogue in New York, at the same time teaching mathematics, physics and Talmud at New York Jewish schools. Before coming to Vilnius I was (and still am) the rabbi of the Riga religious community.

And so here I am now in your country. I could spend a long time comparing this job with those I've had before, but the most important task as I see it through the prism of my experience is to strive to reassess the role and tasks of the rabbi through the eyes of the people and to change the opinions of Lithuanian Jews which has come about for a number of reasons (and the opinions of non-Jews as well, incidentally).

Lithuania is a country which has a grand Jewish history. So all who, in one way or another, appeal to the Lithuanian rabbinate or Jewish identity do so with this past in view. Great efforts and attention is paid in trying to preserve the memory of the past of this country which is truly the font of wisdom for a large portion of contemporary Jewry. But...

It seems to me that in trying to do this--to preserve this history--a rabbi isn't even necessary. At least [not] a Lithuanian rabbi in Lithuania. Both historians and rabbis can do this. In Israel (and

not just there) there are yeshivas and other organizations studying “the legacy of the Lithuanian school of Torah study.” Their representatives travel here, work in the archives and meet with local government officials, seeking to commemorate one location or another, whether that’s a burial site, or a building where many years ago they studied the “Lithuanian Torah” as they proudly call it. They come to me, and it is my honor to help them do this, to commemorate the sites where Torah was taught using those same methods by which I had the honor to learn from my teachers, members of the glorious “Lithuanian school.” But that’s not why I came here. Or at least, that’s really not the only reason.

To a greater or lesser extent, but all the same, currently Jews live in this country. They are born, they go to school, they marry, they divorce, they die... Many, perhaps the majority, manage to get by without a rabbi. They remember the rabbi when they need matzoh for the Passover holiday, forgetting that a rabbi and a shop are two different things. Yes, this is the rabbi’s job, to make it simpler for them to acquire matzoh. But... It seems to me the main task for the rabbi is to become the reb, the rov for the Jews of Lithuania.

You just have to know what that is...

I think it would be complicated to answer this question quickly. In order to understand it, Reb Izakson and I understood the need to set up a rabbinate in Lithuania. And what is a rabbinate? It’s an entire system to provide answers to technical problems which arise for Lithuanian Jews (and not just Jews). It’s easy (expensive, but easy) to ship a container of kosher food here from Israel or America or France once in a while.

But working with Lithuanian producers in trying to find kosher food products (thus helping these producers find new markets abroad at the same time) is the work of the rabbi, not the commercial agent. That is, to ensure the possibility of regular (rather than episodic) Jewish life in the country. To be able to enter the synagogue all the time (rather than only at certain hours), it must become not just a place of prayer (where a Jew spends not more than an hour and a half per day), but a place of the Torah, which rings out “night and day.” That it might be a place where one could come and get a newborn son circumcised. That Jewish marriages would be recognized legally by the state, because later that often helps the rabbi solve more easily family conflicts and manipulation by spouses if, God forbid, divorce happens. Yes, yes, we are accustomed to think about the saddest end to a marriage as well. Speaking of sad things, there is that “final station” which no one manages to avoid, and in that case the rabbi is needed as well. But the main task, of course, is to create the sort of atmosphere and understanding so that people realize the rabbi is a teacher, an advisor, an aide, but in no way the person who takes responsibility for all of our relations with the Creator. It is correcting this error, perhaps, that I see as my main task, not “doing your work for you” in the face of the Almighty, but helping you discover your niche for doing this work formally (for which the rabbinate is necessary) and in reality, to be the one who finds the heartstrings of Jewish souls which are just waiting for the opportunity to open a small door to Him.

Undoubtedly the rabbi should speak at the synagogue, sit in the right place and

so on. But do people really think that’s what his job is? The job (and in this regard the rabbi is equally useful to Jews and non-Jews) is to help find answers to questions, answers whose source is concealed in Eternal Wisdom. And there are answers there for the business person, for the student and for those who have family problems, problems with children... Don’t think the answer is ready and waiting. They have to be sought, and the rabbi must search for them together with the people who came and come to him.

For now our rabbinate is ready to receive those who want their sons circumcised, proof of Jewish identity, marriages according to Torah, and, God forbid, divorce. We will also help business people looking for kosher food markets. Many such requests have already been fulfilled and since we began work several Lithuanian producers have received certificates showing they produce kosher food. The certificate allows them to expand into Israeli and American markets. Several more enterprises have begun these procedures. Kosher certificates have also been issued to the Bagel Shop Café and the Rishon Restaurant. Regular lessons are now taking place at synagogue with several dozen people attending.

I hope Community members will support our initiative. Some still don’t understand why this is necessary, but gradually more and more situations will arise which will help people realize: “open a door as big as a needle’s eye,” and the Creator will open for you a door the size of the whole universe.

We will be happy serving you and supporting you.

*Rabbi Kalev Krelin*

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## EIGHTH MARCH OF THE LIVING IN LITHUANIA

*On May 5 a group of people walked from the Ponar railway station towards the Ponar Memorial Complex. The marchers carried Israeli and Lithuanian flags and flowers and included Israeli ambassador to Lithuania Amir Maimon, Lithuanian Jewish Community chairwoman Faina Kukliansky, Jewish partisan Fania Brancovskaja, Lithuanian Government first deputy chancellor Rimantas Vaitkus and others. They followed the same route along which Jews were forced to walk their final moments before being shot at the pits in Ponar. The idea is that while they died, we’re still alive, and their hopes and aspirations live on into future generations.*

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During the ceremony at the main memorial within the complex, Kukliansky criticized the injustice of not restoring Lithuanian citizenship to Litvaks living in Israel and South Africa: “We never surrendered them [Lithuanian passports] voluntarily, we never renounced them, but the public servants tell us perhaps we shouldn’t have left Lithuania, that everything was alright... never mind that only five percent of those who stayed, survived.”

Ambassador Maimon noted the day was Yom ha Shoah, the official day of commemoration in Israel of the six million Jews murdered in Europe. “Here and at many other locations in Lithuania the ground is soaked in the blood of innocent people. Commemorative candles will be lit by the mass graves in Kėdainiai, Klaipėda, Šilutė and Švėkšna. I hope next year they will be lit at all the mass burial pits in Lithuania,” he said.

Partisan Fania Brancovskaja also spoke, as did deputy chairwoman of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel Yarit Glezer and Vilnius ORT Sholem Aleichem Gymnasium student Ervinas Trusovas. Never again.

The Lithuanian Government House hosted a ceremony to award the title of Righteous Gentile that afternoon. As of

May, 2016, 888 Lithuanian residents have been recognized as Righteous Gentiles. Prime minister Algirdas Butkevičius said the children of Lithuania should learn about the true heroes of the 20th century, those who sought to alleviate suffering and who rescued Jews. “Only by knowing the history of our country and of our people will we be able to create a beautiful and sensitive Lithuania of the future,” he said.

Israeli ambassador to Lithuania Amir Maimon presented certificates and medals from the Yad Vashem Holocaust Commemoration Agency in Israel to family members of the Righteous Gentiles all received the distinction posthumously. The medal contains the inscription “When you save a single life, you save an entire world.”

**The following were recognized as Righteous Gentiles this year:** Kazys Grinius (1866–1950) and Kristina Griniuvienė (1896–1987), Viktorija Jacinavičaitė (1897–1988) and Elena Jacinavičiūtė (1895–1975), Juozas Petrulis (1904–1975), Balys Simanavičius (1907–1984), Konstantin Sokolovskiy (1885–1962) and Viktorija Sokolovskaja (1888–1963), Helena Talkevičiūtė (1899–1986), Juozas Zaveckas (1891–1978) and Marcelė Zaveckienė (1900–1971).



Rachel Margolis across the street from the ghetto library, Vilnius, 2006. Photo by Ray Vysniauskas

*They live among us, largely anonymously and unknown to us, great men and women who over many years working patiently in their everyday jobs have given birth to and continue to build the state of Israel and the state of Lithuania for future generations. Often we never encounter these people in life and only recognize them later, when they’re gone. This June marks one year since the passing of one of them, Dr. Rachel Margolis. Two people, biologist Dr. Jurgis Stašaitis, and Margolis’s former fellow museum worker, Geoff Vasil, agreed to share their memories of their friend, colleague and teacher with the Bagel Shop newsletter.*

*Geoff Vasil recalled: “Yes, Rachel was real, she really existed, a librarian, biologist and partisan who looked like my grandmother.” He wrote us a long piece which he calls “**Library at the End of Time**,” which, due to space constraints, cannot be published in full here, but which will appear on the English-language section of the LJC webpage, [lzb.lt/en](http://lzb.lt/en), which he coordinates. An excerpt appears below.*

...Rachel Margolis died in hospital surrounded by the family she loved in Israel on July 6, 2015. She died after having lived a full life, accomplishing much in Holocaust education, with a daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren. As she wrote in her autobiography, if her friends’ memory lived on in her, they weren’t really dead, and neither is she, because I remember her very well and am so pleased to have met such an honest, humble, daring and good person. Her friends and colleagues all say she was uncompromising; she never compromised with injustice, and acted ethically her entire life.

When I read her autobiography, just now, I realized she was kind of a crazy

kid, the sort of middle class child who embraced the cultural ferment of the 1960s in my world. She attended a Yiddish school in first grade, then Polish schools, and taught herself Russian. She and her friends in Vilna before the war, in Wilno, that is, were concerned about social justice and inequality, met in conspiratorial groups, passed out leftist literature and several of her circle were arrested. Her early Communist affiliations served her well during her life as a partisan and in Soviet Lithuania after the war. She learned Lithuanian after the war to teach biology at Vilnius University.

The first half of her autobiography is dedicated to childish things, memories

of childhood recorded meticulously, the colors of flowers, behavior of insects, all the things which really do fascinate children. This section reluctantly gives way to rather disjointed accounts of going into hiding “on the Aryan side,” entering the Vilna ghetto, then bits of her life as a partisan, first around Lake Narocz and then in Rūdninkai Forest.

I met Rachel through a text, appropriately enough, around 2005. In some obscure literary magazine from Tel Aviv in which Jews who had survived Vilna remembered, Margolis wrote about the Vilna ghetto library. Later, I followed up on what she wrote and discovered the Vilna ghetto truly had been a fractal “state within a state”. The ghetto library’s

reading room was an oasis of tranquility, a place almost sacred, where spirits were recharged. Rachel also wrote about how the FPO, the United Partisans Organization which she joined, used the basement to teach Jews how to shoot guns. Margolis talked about readership and borrowing statistics, which also struck me as extremely odd. Who was keeping statistics when the entire ghetto population was living on borrowed time before being taken to be shot at Ponar? It turns out the man in charge was keeping scrupulous statistics; they even held a public celebration when a milestone number of books had been borrowed which was a great gala event in the ghetto. The statistics themselves were surprising. While one might expect a heavy skew in favor of escapist literature--and there was plenty of that sort of borrowing--in fact the most popular book, for which there was a long waiting list, was about the Armenian genocide under the Ottomans in 1915, "Forty Days of Musa Dagh" by Franz Werfel. My mind boggled.

The director of the Vilna Gaon Museum answered my request for Dr. Margolis's address, which turned out to be in Israel. I wrote her, on paper, a real letter, which wasn't uncommon just a few years ago, and she wrote me back. I'm sure I tried to describe some of my more mystical ideas about libraries--I'm sure I didn't succeed--but instead of writing me off as a crank, she wrote back a long and thoughtful letter, in Lithuanian, saying she didn't know English. She said she would be coming back to Vilnius that summer and we would meet. By the time she arrived, I had already volunteered at the Vilna Gaon Museum and was busy correcting the museum's chronology of events in the Vilna ghetto begun by survivor Evgenia Bieber, who had stopped work at the museum due to health. Margolis wasn't on holiday: she came back every summer to volunteer at the museum, where she had worked basically since it began. I tried to track down just now how she fit into the early museum and learned she was actually hired by former Holocaust Exhibit director Rachel Kostanian at a time when the museum really only existed on paper. She said back in 1988 Emanuelis Zingeris, Regina Koplevich,

she and several others came up with the idea for the museum and gradually it took shape. Margolis approached them and said she wanted to work there. Hiring her wasn't a question: she spoke and wrote five or six languages fluently, including Yiddish and Polish, and knew the Holocaust first hand, both as a Vilna Jew, ghetto inmate and Jewish partisan.

Our first meeting was understated. She looked like a younger version of my grandmother. I think we shook hands, I asked her where she was staying, she said something about an apartment on a certain street and we agreed to talk more over the summer; we'd be working together. My first impression of her was that she was a still-attractive if somewhat older woman (actually she was past her 80s at that point) who was polite, reserved but ready to engage the world. As the summer progressed she was a flurry of activity, leading groups through the museum and through the former ghetto in the Vilnius Old Town, giving interviews in Lithuanian to Lithuanian reporters and basically always on the move. I barely had a chance to talk with her and was still nosing through the few available sources trying to figure out exactly how many Jews from which Belarusian village had been murdered on what date. At a certain point I had to consult Sakowicz's diary. He was a journalist and a Pole, he set up house in Ponar, or Paneriai, which happened to be the sight selected for the mass murder of the Jews of Vilnius. He watched the groups arriving, heard the shooting, noted none of the arrivals ever left, and began keeping a written record of how many on what dates. I vaguely knew Margolis was responsible for bringing this record to the attention of the world--there was a calendar page reproduced in room 3 downstairs upon which Sakowicz had written numbers and the director told me Margolis had done the work on his documents before she arrived that summer. But to cite the source correctly, I checked the title of the English translation on the internet and it came back as the work of Yitzhak Arad, published by Yale Press. At some point in the small description Margolis was mentioned as discoverer or some such. This seemed strange to me, so I went to ask about it. Margolis knew

the mysterious documentation--the Sakowicz diary--existed, but she had no chance to examine it until she was finally granted access around 1989 to several of the fragments under controlled circumstances for a limited time. She realized what they were, probably as she had suspected all along, and eventually the fragments were transferred to the new National Museum of Lithuania. Vilna Gaon Museum received a small portion of the fragments, I am told by staff there now. Margolis back then told me she eventually got access to all of them, and that Sakowicz wrote on anything he could find, on the backs of napkins, receipts, bits of wallpaper; she spent over a year trying to decipher the worst, most crabbed, cobwebbed handwriting she had ever seen, and ruined her eyes as thanks for her effort. Was the reason no one could read them that his handwriting was so awful? Yes, partially, she said, adding that no one really cared to read them anyway. What language were they in? Polish, of course. Everyone spoke Polish in and around Vilnius then, there were almost no Lithuanians at all. Was Polish your first language? It seems to me now that Rachel Margolis told me it was her first language, too. I listened to all of it, quietly, and then said, OK, so why is Yitzhak Arad's name here? At this point she turned quiet and I didn't press, she seemed reluctant to talk about the subject further. She said the only important thing was that the information was out, revealed to the world, and didn't care about getting credit. I know a Yale-trained lawyer, I offered, but she didn't take me up on it. Instead she flashed a very small smile.

That same summer, three youths attacked me and two other museum volunteers. I got punched in the forehead. They all ran away. The next day Rachel Margolis was at the museum before I got there and had already heard about it. In the doorway to room 1 she asked me if I was OK. I said I was fine, it was just a random attack. Then her body language changed. She stood a bit taller and her arms flexed as if she were gripping a rail perhaps. "Should we go look for them?" she asked. It wasn't a joke. This woman was ready to go find these guys and teach them what for. I realize now she had adopted me into her par-

tisan division, so to speak, when I went to talk to her about the credit for the Sakowicz diary, and she decided I was sticking up for her. I have no doubt she would have engaged them in a street fight, and I believe she probably would have won.

Another time Rachel told me about the Partisan Hymn. I know she's told the story a number of times, but I'll tell it as I remember she told it to me personally. The song is rather well known in Israel and became the anthem of the Jewish resistance in Europe, not just Lithuania. "Sog nit keynmol", "Never Say", was the title track in the soundtrack to the film "Partisans of Vilna" from the 1970s which I watched that summer. There was an exhibit in the museum of the sheet music with the lyrics in several languages and a picture of a young man named Hirsh Glik. I didn't know then Rachel had made that exhibit. She told me she knew Hirsh Glik. She said one cold winter day as evening was approaching she ran into him on a square which once existed next to what is now the Center for Contemporary Arts in the Vilna ghetto. Hirsh was very excited because he had just written a new poem, and he wanted to recite it to her right there and then. It was freezing that winter and the adults hurrying by looked at them as if they were crazy kids, lovers perhaps, standing out in the cold freez-

ing to death. Hirsh began to recite his poem, and as he did, Rachel listened raptly, and the cold grew colder. She began to hear a song under, behind or between the lines. The song fit the words. It was a song from a Russian film she'd seen. After he was finished, she told him about the song. They decided to put the song to music. The leaders of the FPO decided an anthem wasn't a bad idea, and approved it. They were very happy they had contributed at least this to the underground resistance.

She told me personally in the front office of the Green House she wasn't sure she would be coming back in summers to follow, before Lithuanian prosecutors sought to question her regarding alleged crimes by her friend Fania Brancovskaja and her acquaintance Yitzhak Arad. She told me it was getting harder to travel because of old age and her daughter needed her in Israel. Her daughter Emma, named after Rachel's mother, had a second child and Rachel felt it was her duty to help. She had moved to a house next to her daughter's in Rehovot or Rishon LeZiyyon south of Tel Aviv around the year 2000. While Dovid Katz sought to use her as a sort of poster child in his newfound outrage over Lithuanian anti-Semitism and his very arrival to the topic of the Holocaust, Rachel was not afraid of anyone, least of all anti-Semitic Lithuanian pa-

per campaigns against Jews. Although her partisan career was anticlimactic in many ways, she was perfectly willing to avenge her murdered father, mother, brother and friends by killing the perpetrators. While her decision not come back to Lithuania after that might have included calculations of the Lithuanian nuisance factor, I think it really came down to age and family.

Library lady, biology teacher, the lady with the kind blue eyes and curly hair, connoisseur of classical music, flowers and French literature and guerilla fighter in the dark swamps and forests where once Napoleon beat a hasty retreat. It's my grandma with an AK-47, it's the library lady who keeps a double-barreled shotgun under the checkout counter and recites long passages of Nietzsche in German to herself on slow days. But she's real, I met her, and for me she was a friend, even if we didn't have enough time to explore all our common interests or go shooting together. I think we'll meet again, in a library somewhere, where the woman in spectacles behind the counter will knit her brow and point angrily at the sign: "Please use your silencers when engaged in target practice in the library. Your kindness is appreciated by your fellow patrons." Or fellow partisans, I suppose...

Geoff Vasil

*Rachel Margolis worked for several decades in the Zoology Cathedral at the Natural Sciences Faculty of Vilnius University. She taught there, trained upcoming biologists and did academic work. One person who knew Margolis well was Dr. Jurgis Stašaitis. "Fond memories remain of this extraordinary and sincere person. When she used to come back from Israel in the summer we used to meet. We drove to take walks in places which reminded us of our youth. I took her guided tour of the Vilnius ghetto. I recorded what she said then, I still have it, if it would interest anyone," Dr. Stašaitis said. Dr. Stašaitis's home library includes a book of memoirs by Rachel dedicated to him on his 70th birthday. Based on those memoirs and personal conversations, he prepared a text for the Bagel Shop newsletter: "The book «Немного света во мраке : воспоминания» [A Ray of Light in the Darkness, Russian and English, 2006-2008], the memoirs written so well by Rachel, will not let us forget her life: the sunny days of youth, the atrocities of war, the horror of the Holocaust, underground activities in the ghetto, years of partisan struggle and the decades in the post-war period."*

### **We Remember Rachel Margolis**

Rachel held strong views about life and the order of things. She bravely defended her convictions and almost never changed her mind. She grew up in Polish Vilnius and didn't approve of its return to Lithuania in 1939. She saw "problems" with the Soviet system, as she called them, but believed in the future. She said no system is perfect. She was in favor of the

restoration of Lithuanian independence. When she moved to her daughter's in Israel she used to visit Lithuania every year. She worked extensively in the archives of the Jewish museum, led tours of the former ghetto site, visited Ponar and really loved spending time in the places of her youth. She was so happy visiting here every year! "This is my home," she used to say. She used to become sad when it was time to depart.

### **On Family**

Rachel spent almost her entire life in Vilnius. She grew up in a well-to-do family and lacked for nothing. She studied music and French at home. Her father was a famous Vilnius x-ray specialist and doctor. They rented a seven-room apartment on the Neris River by the Green Bridge where the x-ray equipment was set up, and there was the doctor's office and a reception room. He was very busy and used to eat lunch on the run, with no time for fun. He was also a great saver of money, the rent was high, there were lots of family expenses and he also supported relatives, paying for their education. Later he bought a house with a garden off Vilniaus street, and built a beautiful summer cottage in Valakampiai. Rachel's mother ran the household. Rachel remembered her from childhood as beautiful, tall, with braided hair. She was an educated and happy woman who enjoyed music. "Mother loved me very much, but never had the patience to spend a longer time with me. I used to play alone," Rachel recalled.

### **On the Ghetto and Partisan Resistance**

When World War II began Rachel was already a student at university. She chose biology as her major. But it didn't last long. Soon the Nazis set up the ghetto where Rachel's parents ended up, while she went into hiding. She soon decided she needed to be with her parents and younger brother. When she came into the ghetto, she joined the underground organization preparing for an uprising in the ghetto and collecting weapons. There she met one underground activist, Chaim Zaidelson, her future husband. Life in the ghetto was atrocious. The people were starving and lived together in large groups. Working outside the ghetto, sometimes they managed to get some food, but the ghetto guards confiscated it, beat them, and often shot the prisoner. Human dignity was completely trampled. Every new day might be your last. But still there burned the hope of surviving: people visited the ghetto library, there was a drama theater, Rachel's father worked in the ghetto hospital. At that time there was constant mass murder at Ponar, and so-called actions being carried out.

The only way for ghetto inmates to survive was to take the path to Rūdninkai Forest and fight fascism. They left at night and went eastward. They had to walk almost 200 kilometers, spending the day in the depths of the forest on the watch for Ger-



Rachel Margolis tells biology students about her experience in the Vilnius ghetto, 1970. Photo: J. Stašaitis

mans, starving, walking on blistered and bleeding feet. When they reached the area around Lake Naruch and made contact with Belarusian partisans, Rachel and Chaim were sorely disappointed: they took their money, watches, rings, jackets and even took their good boots. Rachel and a small group managed to get back to Lithuania. From what Rachel Margolis told me, I remember she became gravely ill and spent a long time in bed in the barracks. She didn't see combat. She greeted the arrival of Soviet troops in Vilnius with joy. Vilnius was still on fire and there was the stench of recently burnt corpses still hanging over Ponar. Rachel's beloved parents and brother were murdered just a week before the Germans withdrew.

### **After the War**

After the war Margolis completed her degree at Vilnius University. While still a student she worked as a technical secretary at different agencies and then later found work at a library. She lived on the edge of starvation with her husband Chaim in an unheated building. She learned the Lithuanian language well and became a teacher at VU. She later defended her dissertation on sweet cherry varieties of Žemaitija. She was awarded the title of associate professor and university lecturer. She taught evolution at the Natural Sciences Faculty, later variable statistics, i.e., mathematical methods applied to biology. She prepared her lessons very responsibly and delivered them very well. She led lab work and directed bachelor diploma work. The students loved her and we, the biologists, considered her one of our favorite colleagues. She liked to travel with her husband during vacations.

Her only child, Emma, also graduated from Vilnius University. She was a very bright, talented and dutiful student. After that she married and lived in Moscow. She did her dissertation there and gave birth to a daughter. Emma and her family later moved to Israel.

Rachel's husband died suddenly in 1986. She was alone. She soon went into retirement and dedicated all her energies to reopening the Jewish museum which was closed down in 1948. When her second granddaughter was born she put her documents in order quickly and left for Israel, where she lived next door to her daughter and took care of the granddaughters who dearly love their grandmother.

*Jurgis Stašaitis*



Rachel Margolis with colleague Bronė Usinienė at Stirnių lake near Vilnius, 2007. Photo: J. Stašaitis

# Advances in the Use of Technology within European Jewish Cemeteries

*Last fall Vilnius hosted an international conference on cemetery research. Dr. Caroline Sturdy Colls, conference participant and Associate Professor of Forensic Archaeology and Genocide Investigation at Staffordshire University, United Kingdom, agreed to share her knowledge with our readers.*

Before the Holocaust, Jewish cemeteries were at the heart of Jewish communities across Europe, as places where the history of the Jewish people was preserved and remembered. During the Holocaust, the Nazis saw them as physical and symbolic expressions of Jewish culture. In an attempt to erase all traces of Jewish people, tombstones were toppled, graves desecrated, bones removed, and funerary houses looted. Not content with inflicting physical damage, the Nazis used cemeteries as execution sites, with mass graves excavated for (and sometimes by) those killed.

Within the field of archaeology, archaeologists have developed well-tested methodologies for locating and excavating historic cemeteries and, in the field of forensic archaeology, for identifying unmarked graves. However, the examination of Jewish cemeteries using archaeological approaches has been limited. This is in spite of the fact that the majority of Jewish cemeteries remain under threat. Many are damaged, dilapidated and/or reused for other purposes. Therefore, there is an urgent need to locate, record and characterize them before more traces of the past, and more importantly people, are lost. Because of this damage, dilapidation and reuse, there may be obstacles to interventions within cemeteries. Vegetation and even structural remains may obscure them, vandalism may have ruined them, and neglect may have caused their locations to fade from living memory. Several examples exist here in Lithuania. Due to the condition many cemeteries are found in, there is often the perception that nothing remains of them. However, as an archaeologist experienced in examining historic and contemporary sites, I know

that the traces of these important places will likely remain hidden below the surface.

In the past, the traces of Jewish cemeteries have not been examined in detail using archaeological methods because many archaeologists have failed to find a balance between scientific investigation and the religious requirements of Halachic Law. Traditional methods of archaeological excavation will not usually be appropriate in cemeteries due to the Halachic stipulation that disturbing the body of a person buried in a cemetery also disturbs their soul. On occasion, there has been fierce confrontation between archaeologists and Jewish communities when excavation has been carried out at, for example, sites of Nazi atrocity.

However, the reality is that sites will come under threat from development, graves may emerge due to erosion, research initiatives may be instigated and there may be a desire to erect fences, restore cemeteries and locate unmarked graves in the future. It is also important to remember that not all remains at Jewish cemeteries will be buried and therefore we should not overlook the other elements that make up cemeteries e.g. funeral houses and mausoleums, that have the potential to reveal new information about people and communities about whom knowledge has been lost.

## **Non-Invasive Archaeology**

Fortunately, archaeologists now have a number of non-invasive techniques at their disposal that offer the opportunity to investigate Jewish cemeteries in a way that respects their religious significance, overcomes the challenges posed by years of

neglect and maximizes the amount of information that can be gleaned about them.

The assimilation of different types of data recorded using non-invasive methods offers numerous opportunities for education and the dissemination of information about Jewish cemeteries. By merging together three dimensional, spatially accurate data with material collected about the people and communities connected to cemeteries, it is possible to create heritage tools that both educate and commemorate. Whilst there are already many important databases of Jewish cemeteries, non-invasive archaeological survey offers the opportunity to enrich these platforms and provide new ones that provide highly accurate virtual tours alongside maps, documents, photographs and other historical information. This has been successfully achieved by the author in relation to Treblinka extermination and labour camps in Poland for example, by making it possible encounter archival and archaeological sources during a virtual tour of the site. Therefore, to adapt Ruth Ellen Gruber's assertion about cemetery restoration, archaeological surveys of Jewish cemeteries are vital in order to "rescue memory and return from oblivion." These methods would undoubtedly be of value for recording Jewish cemeteries in Lithuania, particularly those that remain at risk of development or ongoing neglect.

The first stage of any archaeological investigation should be the desk-based assessment phase. During this phase, archaeologists will examine historical documents, testimonies, photographs, historic and recent maps, aerial photographs and satellite imagery in order to evaluate the extent and nature of sites. Let me provide an example. During the Occupation of the island of Alderney in the British Channel Islands, the Nazis interred thousands of forced labourers, including Jewish and non-Jewish people from all over Europe. Hundreds are known to have died; whilst some were buried in individual graves within a cemetery, the bodies of others were never found. In 2010, I initiated a project which sought to locate the remains of the cemetery and mass graves on Alderney. The first stage of this work involved the collation of maps, documents and photographs, and the analysis of hundreds of aerial photographs in order to identify its possible location,



Figure 1: Comparison of a photograph taken in 1945 of Longy Common cemetery on Alderney of Jewish graves with a modern image showing the former locations of these graves (Copyright: Barney Winder (top image) and Caroline Sturdy Colls (bottom image)).

and to characterise where the individual and mass graves were to be found. Likewise, owing to the fact that the Jewish victims were known to have been buried in a separate area within the cemetery, it was the aim of the research to locate these burials without disturbing the ground. The resulting analysis demonstrated how the cemetery had developed over time from 1942 to 1945, and clearly indicated the positions of the rows of individual graves, potential mass graves and Jewish area of the cemetery due to the presence of visible ground disturbance in these images. Likewise, landscape markers shown in contemporary photographs can be identified in the modern landscape to help determine the location of cemeteries and groups of graves, as in the example of the Jewish area of the cemetery in Alderney (Fig. 1).

A recent development in remote sensing comes in the form of airborne LiDAR survey, LiDAR uses the emission and reflection of laser pulses to generate three dimensional digital terrain models. These models show depressions in the ground, including those invisible to the naked eye, caused by the presence of buried remains, such as graves and structures, and so they can be used to detect graves, cemeteries boundaries and structures. Another advantage of this method is that it allows vegetation to be digitally removed from the image – so if graves, boundaries and

structures are present within woodlands or underneath dense vegetation, it is still possible to detect them. I have successfully used this method to identify graves located deep within woodland near to the forced labour camps at Treblinka and Adampol in Poland. I am also using it to detect unmarked Jewish cemeteries in the Włodawa region of Poland, as well as individual and mass graves in the town of Oświęcim.

Terrestrial LiDAR methods (also known as laser scanning) also exist which allow matzevah to be scanned in three dimensions. This creates a permanent digital record for research and education, and (because of high definition nature of the technology) may make visible inscriptions on tombstones that are difficult to see with the naked eye. Virtual tours of cemeteries can also be created using this technology and using 360 degree photographs to allow those unable to go to sites in person a chance to “visit”.

The destruction of Jewish cemeteries, whether by the Nazis or as a result of other landscape modification, resulted in the toppling and removal of tombstones, and the desecration of graves. Thus many of the physical remnants of Jewish cemeteries will only survive below the ground. Archaeologists now have a suite of geophysical methods they can use to identify buried remains and to model them in three dimensions. The example of Alderney mentioned earlier provides a useful example. Here, the boundaries of the cemetery are no longer marked, nor are the sections of the cemetery which were used for Jewish and non-Jewish individual and mass burial. Resistance survey is a type of geophysical survey which can be used to detect shallow changes in resistance in the soil caused by the presence of buried remains. Using this method, it was possible to detect the boundaries of the cemetery and the rows of individual graves in each area. It was also possible to observe several possible mass graves inside and outside the cemetery boundaries which were also visible in aerial photographs of the area. Another technique, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), which uses electromagnetic radio waves to detect disturbances below the ground, was then used to record the cemetery in three dimensions and further analyse the extent and nature of

the graves (Fig. 2). By analyzing historical material collected during the desk-based assessment phase in conjunction with these results, it was possible to identify previously unknown graves and examine patterns in the configuration of the graves within the cemetery. Geophysical survey has been used at other sites to identify the locations of graves so that these areas could be marked and avoided during future development or excavation works. In August 2016, I will use these methods to help locate unmarked graves and toppled tombstones in Oświęcim cemetery.



Figure 2: Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey (Copyright: Dr Caroline Sturdy Colls)

#### **In the future, non-invasive methods offer the opportunity to:**

- locate cemeteries, their boundaries and the graves they contain
- locate (and re-erect) tombstones
- examine motifs and text on tombstones
- locate and protect mass graves of atrocities committed within cemeteries
- understand more about cultural genocide perpetrated within cemeteries
- preserve sites by way of digital record and create innovative educational tools.

#### **Crucially, they offer the opportunity to do so:**

- in a way that respects religious law concerning burials (e.g. without disturbing the ground if required)
- despite the dilapidated and hidden nature of sites
- regardless of the size of the area being examined
- in a way that creates a sustainable, thorough record of Jewish cemeteries which provides new opportunities for education and commemoration worldwide.

*Caroline Sturdy Colls*

# INTRODUCTION TO ART

## with Raimondas Savickas

Since last fall the smell of oil paints has hung in the hallways of the Lithuanian Jewish Community every Sunday. Those who have fallen in love with art and can no longer live without it meet in the sunny studio. One Sunday I stopped by to take a look. The studio was full of easels and works of art portraying a variety of scenes in various states of completion. It seemed as if a sort of creative chaos prevailed, but the people at the easels were in a state of earnest concentration. The only sound was the crinkling of cellophane, which was draped across the floor. For several hours now they had been working hard on a still life with a teapot and fruit, putting it to paper.

As the students were preparing for a critique session, I spoke with the man teaching the class, the founder of the Savickas Art School, Raimondas Savickas.

**Have you been holding classes for different groups of people long? How did these painting classes come to the Lithuanian Jewish Community?**

Yes, the Savickas Art School for Adults is 15 years old. Last summer we staged a plein air painting trip at Bebrusai Lake in the Molėtai Region. I was in charge of the plein air. Members of the Jewish community attended, as did non-members, and professional artists as well as beginners. They came from all over Lithuania. We also had guests from Israel. Later we held an exhibition at the LJC. The success of the plein air was the main motivation for setting up the school at the LJC.

**How many students do you have at the LJC? What's the point of these classes?**

As usual, at the start in fall there were very many people who wanted to attend, but some of them dropped off a bit later. Now there's around twenty. There are two groups, more accomplished and less accomplished. There were those who came without any knowledge at all. We follow a specific program, theory is combined with practice. We have been working since September and so we have made a lot of progress. The students now know how to work with paints and complete their tasks. We want to give



Photos by Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik



them the basics of the history of painting, drawing and art so they can work independently and perfect their own styles. We're holding an exhibition at the end of classes again opening June 16.

**Is it really true some people can't draw?**

Yes, and that's why we're here. Just as in music, there is an ear in art, the individual must discover their sense of color themselves and portray it. That comes to the fore in the first lessons. People don't know their own talents. But if there's an attraction, they should try. Of course some people are better at drawing lines, while others have an ideal sense of color. But it all comes through work. Those who patiently work each Sunday achieve wonderful results.

**So everyone can learn to paint?**

No, really not, first they must have the desire and do a lot of hard work. Often people don't even show up, they chose to spend their free time learning dance or languages or something else.

**But age is not an obstacle?**

Since you asked, yes, age is an obstacle. We only work with adults. Starting at post-high school age but without an upper limit.

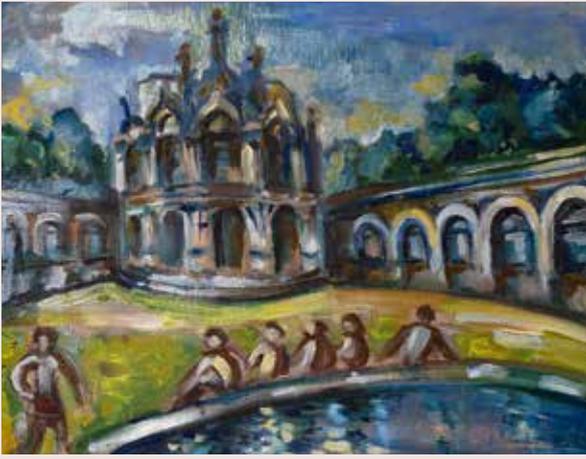
**What about next fall?**

We will have a new group at the LJC. And now, in mid-year, there are still many who want to join. But I can't accept them. Another plein air is planned for August 8 to 14 at the same location in the Molėtai region. We're inviting people to come.

**What did you get from these initial art classes at the LJC?**

I got all sorts of questions from the students, but it's difficult to surprise me. In this group we orient toward judaica. We paint synagogues and learn about Litvak artists. This is the first class of its kind for me and I've learned new things. I can say confidently we are sharing information with the students.

**Thank you.**



Salomėja Rybokienė

*The easels surround us as the critique session begins. Each teapot looks different. The fruit and the drapery are all arranged differently and in different hues.*

*“Today we worked on a still life with fruit and dishes. Food elements were very frequently portrayed in Flemish and Dutch painting. I chose the colors and tones in order to train your painting ear. We began with the composition: we arranged the objects in such a way that they wouldn’t be too central, but not on the periphery either. And then the main color combinations: background, dra-*



Jevgenij Comik

*pery, tablecloth and other items. Three or four main colors. Then we refine it. Form and detail come later,” Raimondas Savickas explains.*

*The teacher then discusses the results of the lesson. He finds something to praise*

*in each artist’s work and offers advice. “Good choice of colors, this goes together very well, the fruit are nice, the yellow is warm and cold. That red could be improved... The composition, I’m not sure, everything is on the edge. But the arrangement and form of the fruit are great. The color tones go well with the teapot. Good details. Here gray is separated from gray by a single line. They should be separated softly with half-*

*tones. And I’d put some cadmium red here... And here are some strokes with temperament, there is life throbbing in each one. There is refinement there... The composition works. You don’t have to do much more at all. The background could use some work...” he tells his students. One class is never enough to finish a painting. The next time they come to class their paintings are enriched, fixed, with added detail. As the critique ended I quickly asked the students how they came into the class and whether their lives had changed since last fall.*

**Ala Segal:** “I am a teacher, but have nothing in common with art. I thought I’d go and relax when the plein air was announced, but when I found all the tools in my hands I began to paint. And I really liked it, it was really interesting to talk with the artists. I began to look differently at art in exhibitions. I no longer see just the scene, I also see what colors are used and what technique was used.”

**Salomėja Rybokienė:** “When I was young I used to draw and I graduated as an architect. When I found out there would be a plein

air in summer, I almost screamed for joy, here was a chance to renew my talents. Attending Savickas’s classes I realized I don’t have to confine myself to routine work, I can do something for the soul as well. Just walking on the street I see the sky, sidewalk and building façades

differently now. I look for shadows and the play of light, and I think about how to portray it best.”

**Yevgeniy Tsomik:** “I began totally by accident, my wife said we should and wanted us to go to the plein air. I was totally against it. But a breakthrough occurred at that plein air.”



Frida Vitkauskienė

**Yelena Tsomik:** “The last time I held a brush in my hands was probably sixth or seventh grade. I cannot draw at all. So I’m very pleased that I can portray a teapot now. I try to discover the shadows and colors. My husband really didn’t want to go to the plein air. But now he’s painting like a maniac. We’re the only ones here from Kaunas.”

**Inga Mališauskaitė:** “Like most, I was at the plein air in summer. For the first time the LJC organized a plein air, an art event dedicated to the memory of Litvak artists. It was Junona Bertznit-ski’s idea. There was a wonderful at-



Inga Mališauskaitė

mosphere at the plein air and a company of friends grew out of it, most of whom attend these classes. Here you can get away from daily life and talk about colors, composition, tones. After that you see more often the beauty in small things and nuances of color. It's a great joy."

**Elen Yanovskaya:** "These classes are the fulfillment of a childhood dream for me. It so happened in life that ten years ago I began to learn jewelry making. There was no place for art, though, which I really wanted. Of course we won't become great masters, but we'll get a wonderful foundation. Life has truly changed. No more lying on the sofa on Sundays thinking about what to do."

**Viktorija Gudžiūnaitė:** "I didn't go to the plein air, I came straight to the class. I have a fun activity for the soul. I regret not doing anything like this earlier. I am not connected with art, I'm a computer information science specialist. Now I'm not happy without art. At home I work in pastels only. I'm planning to go to my summer cottage. There I'll throw open the windows and work in oil."

**Frida Vitkauskienė:** "My life changed after the plein air. My children used to say: 'Mama, you should draw, you should be doing that. I drew in my youth, but as an amateur, I didn't study anywhere. My mother drew and my uncle wanted to be a painter. Everyone drew at home, it was the normal thing. I really lack time and I have to steal it away from other activities. So far I'm not thinking about what will happen after the class is over. I know there's a lot I still don't know. I am learning."

**Natalija Mockienė:** "I'm getting ready for old age, so I'll have something to do when I can no longer go anywhere. I want to draw, but it's not going very well so far. Now I want to look at the sky more. I keep thinking about how to draw. It's complicated. It's great there is this studio here where you can come and spend three hours."

*Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik*

# VALIUS STAKNYS: Grateful to Fate and Herman Perelstein

It's nice to talk with Valius Staknys. He makes life seem brighter and more fun. Full of happy moments and unusual experiences. One should always view daily life that way. He remembers everything: stories from Vilnius, Kaunas, St. Petersburg, Riga, Tallinn and distant Siberia; his inspiring friends, colleagues and teachers; the Neva River and its canals, the small streets of the Vil-



Valius Staknys with his teacher Herman Perelstein.  
From personal collection.

nius ghetto, repetitions, unexpected meetings and, of course, opera. Now Valius's pencil is drawing icons. We met to talk about an exhibition of his graphic works held in the Shofar gallery at the Jewish Culture and Information Center in December of 2015. Center director Algimantas Gurevičius was happy to host the show. On seventeen pieces of thick vatmen paper appears one scene after another, ever more remarkable than the previous, funny pictures, reflections of a fantastic world, unrestricted by time and form. One has to look carefully, using a magnifying glass. The exhibit is called "I am Because You are, the Residents of Vilnius" This is the artist's first showing, although he's been doing graphics for a long time. The show came about largely thanks to Maša Grodnikienė. The heroes of his pictures are responsible for the colorful, Chagall-like world they create and... the polemics with a goat. Valius says the works really belong to the characters they contain.

"I don't know why it happened that way, but my entire life there have always been remarkable people around me and they influenced me very much. I was raised in the care of Herman Perelstein, the director of the "Ažuoliukas" choir. Thanks to him, I went to study in St. Petersburg, where again I entered a circle of highly educated Russian Jews. Emil Pasynekob, Isaak Glikman, Mikhail Belik, Roman Tikhomirov, Margarita Slutskaia--all of them were irreplaceable teachers. I became a different person. Several Jewish families lived in the building where I lived with my wife. They handed down their children's clothes sent from Israel to our daughter Laima. Jews have always been very good to me. I remember back when I was in primary school when we moved out of the center of the city to Žemieji Paneriai [Lower Ponar], I often went to have lunch at the homes of my friends Alik Feder and Yosif Kronzon. And that was the usual," Valius said.

After Stalin's death Valius Staknys passed through the Karelo-Finnish SSR, Murmansk oblast and the Arkhangelsk oblast before arriving in Vilnius and becoming a resident. "I was about five. Then I got colored pencils and began to draw. Although we were poor, my childhood passed, as it does for every child, filled with noise and mischief. I lived on Wielka Pohulanka [aka Pogulanskaya, Pogulanka bolshaya ulitsa, now Basanavičius gatvė] in what is now the courtyard of the Ministry of Culture. And the "Ažuoliukas" choir entered my life. Herman

Perelstein, a very charismatic person, accepted me into the choir. He was an unusually highly educated member of the Kaunas intelligentsia in the period between the wars. The young people of “Ažuoliukas” grew up surrounded by real erudites, unusually spiritually people. I can’t forego mentioning pianist Nadežda Dukstulskaitė and maestro Jonas Aleksa. Perelstein had an idea: he wanted to create a boys’ choir in Vilnius, and he pursued this goal relentlessly. Soon we were singing well in three voices. There were a great many Jews in “Ažuoliukas” and their names and surnames surprised me. The most important thing, though, was that singing unified us and we spent wonderful summers together. As choir leader Perelstein infused us with an unholy urge to sing, and he was very successful. The choir sang, and sang soulfully and deeply.”

Valius spent several summers with Perelstein in Šventoji on the Lithuanian coast. He recalls it: “At first, I was one of the campers. Later I was camp leader. I’ll never forget how one night Herman woke me up, it was probably two o’clock in the morning. ‘Valius, get up. You simply must go with me,’ he said. I very reluctantly got up, since I was the camp leader and in the morning there was roll-call and a hundred boys... But I got up. And he led me to the sea. The Baltic Sea was so completely still, more than I’d ever seen it before. And the silvery full moon. Incredible, extraordinary. That moon is pictured in my graphics work dedicated to Perelstein. We had this tradition in Liepkalnis of planting oak saplings and one year during the planting my mother met Perelstein. She remembered that meeting her entire life. Herman’s enchanting aura affected hundreds of people.”

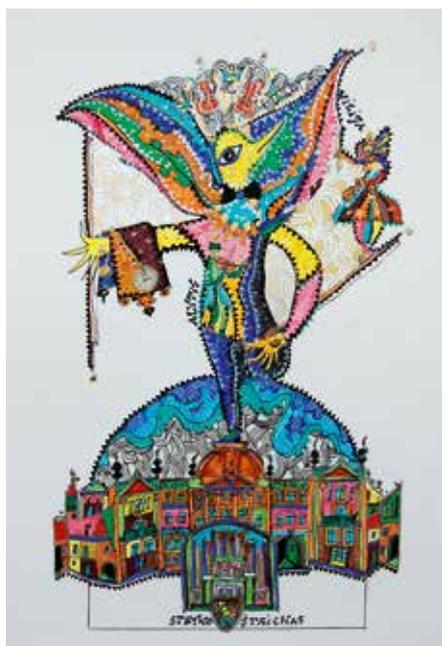
Later there other adventures with Herman. “Once, back in Soviet times, we were supposed to give a concert in Tallinn. Herman arrived... wearing a white suit. White! He came up and asked me: ‘Valius, how do I look?’ I had completely lost the power of speech and was not able to answer him at all... He with his ... crazily long arms



“Masha [Grodnikienė] with Jascha [Heifetz].” LJC, Pylimo street n. 4, Vilnius. Center: Maša Grodnikienė bearing flowers for Jascha playing violin. That’s Liuba sitting down. I changed the decorative motifs at the top of the building, adding two Jesus Christ fish a hand with an eye. A carriage drives from Halle market to the Tarbut pulled by a unicorn and Pegasus.



“Vytai-TAI, this is for you!” Perelstein said as he shook off the ashes. Here is portrayed the bridge in Šventoji, a fish, a boat (since Herman sailed to New York). And a ladder. Such an idyll. And his moon at night.



“Stroke of the Bow” dedicated to Vilija and Algimantas Peseckai, who play in the Domarkas and Opera and Ballet Theater Orchestras. The world is again according to Chagall.

and fingers... Yes, he looked wonderful. And the Tallinn audience was enthralled.”

Asked why he came back to Lithuania, Valius was quick to answer: “I spent six years in St. Petersburg. I got married. I received an offer to go to Moscow, but Vilnius pulls me back. It’s the most beautiful city in the world. I worked at the Kaunas Music Theater for four or five years, but I didn’t fit in. All my graphic works are dedicated to the stories of Vilnius, the Vilnius Opera House.”

At the end of our conversation Valius sighed, smiled and said, looking somewhere far away:

“I’d like to sit in the Vilnius streetcar and ride from Halle’s Market to the Tarbut. I think I’d hear the enchanting melodies of the violin of Jascha Heifetz there.”

*Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik*

## JEWISH BOOK CORNER

Stamps and ex libris on books and periodicals conserved at the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library provide information about the relationships and cooperation between Jews and Lithuanians; using them it is possible to get some idea about the size of collections which belonged to the Jewish community, Jewish associations and libraries.

This time we'll tell two stories which have a point in common: the shtetl of Vekshne (Viekšniai in Lithuanian) which had cheders, the Tarbut school next to which the library and a drama troupe made up of young people.



Ex libris of professor Mykolas Biržiška



Stamp of the Association of Friends of Jewish Learning, Vekshne Office

**Title** Di naye shul / The New School / די נייע שול

**Frequency of publication** monthly

**Editors** David Lubotski, Gershon Pludermakher, Zalman Reizen

**Place of publication** Vilner Publishing House, Vilnius

**Date** 1920, Nos. 1–2

A Lithuanian-Jewish cultural cooperation association operated from 1928 to 1937 whose chairman was Lithuanian literature historian and February 16 Act of Independence signatory professor Mykolas Biržiška (1882–1962). The main activity of the association was lectures on Jewish literature and Jewish political aspirations. In one of the interviews he gave to the newspaper Vilniaus žinios [News of Vilnius], he said: “There is a wealth of interesting and rich academic material at YIVO, which is an academic center of Jews from the entire world, not just from Lithuania. I would like for some students to learn a bit of Yiddish and take a look at that material.” According to Danielis Čarnas, Biržiška highly valued Jewish culture, knew Yiddish and read Jewish newspapers.<sup>1</sup> The statement is proved by

professor's ex libris on the periodical front page.

Born in Vekshne, professor Biržiška wrote in his memoirs about the Jews of the shtetl: “... From the very beginning Jews lived there, from the square they spread towards the bridge... You could call the square that entire territory which is divided down the middle by two lines of shops, where the markets were held twice weekly (on Tuesdays and Fridays), and two or three times a year kermošiai (from the German Kirchmesse “church feast”) and jomarkai (German Jahrmarkt “market once a year”).”<sup>2</sup>

**Title** Dramen / Dramas / דראמען

**Author** Isaac Leib Peretz (1852–1915)

**Place of publication** Boris Kleckin's Vilner Publishing House, Vilnius

**Date** 1922

On Yiddish classic's Peretz book a stamp of the Association of Friends of Jewish Learning, Vekshne office is present. The Association (1924–1936) had as its goal providing scientific and academic news to its membership and people in Lithuania. The association was established in Kaunas, but had sections in whole country. Members spread learning by establishing libraries, reading rooms, book stores and museums, publishing books, holding lectures, discussions, courses, plays, etc. The founders included the mathematician Timotejus Bramsonas, Jokūbas Mišurskis and Marijona Dobkinienė, among others.<sup>3</sup> There was an office of the association in Vekshne as well.

*Kristina Dūdaitė*

*Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library*

**Members are invited to attend three different camps this summer:**

**OLAMEINU MISHPAHA**

for children and their parents, June 22–26;

**OLAMEINU for Kids,**

for 6–12-year-olds, July 4–13 and

**OLAMEINU for Teens,**

for 13–17-year-olds, July 18–28.

Counselors supervise the children at the camps with planned activities, games during the day and evening skits and performances by the counselors and children. Every year we strive to tell the children about Jewish traditions and the culture and history of our people. We invite guests, professionals in their field, who also assist with events for the children and organize performances. We encourage the children to be independent, cultivate their artistic talents, teach them how to get along together and how to work as a team.

We expect 100 children for each camp this year from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

*Pavel Guliakov*

*Youth Program Coordinator*

*Pavel Guliakov became our Youth Program Coordinator late last year. He organizes seminars for Jewish camp counselors, the camps themselves and coordinates all educational programs for children, including the Ilan and Knafaim clubs and the Jewish Camp Counselors School. He himself began attending LJC children's programs at the age of eight, and was graduated from the Vilnius Sholem Aleichem ORT Gymnasium. At 18 he began working with children at LJC clubs and camps. He studied tourism and hotel management at the International School of Law and Business in Vilnius. Let's wish him much success and hopefully happy challenges ahead!*

1 Izraelis Lempertas. “Užmiršta jidiš puoselėtoja” [Forgotten (Female) Lover of Yiddish]/conference material from “Vilniaus žydų intelektualinis gyvenimas iki Antrojo pasaulinio karo medžiaga” [Intellectual Life of Jews of Vilnius Before World War II], held September 16 and 17, 2003, Vilnius.

2 www.zydai.lt/lt/content/viewitem/741/

3 LCVA, f. 410, ap. 8, b. 229, l. 2–3 ap.

## LJC SOCIAL CENTER STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Name, Surname	Title	Telephone
Simas Levinas	Director, LJC Social Center; chairman, Vilnius Jewish Religious Community	(8 5) 212 1655
Žana Skudovičienė	Day Club, club programs	(8 5) 212 7061 8 678 81 514
Ninelė Skudovičiūtė	Information and general questions about documents	8 679 54 631
Rašėlė Šeraite	Social support for children and middle aged people	8 652 13 146
Ema Jakobienė	Food program, heating bill compensation	(8 5) 261 1251
Michail Segal	Programs coordinator, Social Center manager	8 650 75 939
Diana Paškovaite	Coordinator, Medical Programs	8 609 97 334
Irina Frišman	Curator, Patronage services department	(8 5) 261 7244
Kristina Randakevičiūtė	Curator, Patronage services department	(8 5) 261 7244
Sandra Alpertaitė-Lokutijevska	Curator, Patronage services department	(8 5) 261 7244
Ugnė Gėgžnaitė	Curator, Patronage services department	(8 5) 261 7244
Sulamita Lev	Medical equipment, laundry and dry cleaning services	(8 5) 261 1736
Volunteer doctors	Medical consultations from 12 noon to 3:00 P.M.	(8 5) 261 4582
Geršonas Taicas	Lecture series	8 689 83 293

## LJC CLUB COORDINATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of club	Coordinator	Telephone	E-mail
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Dubi Club	Margarita Koževatova	8 618 00 577	margarita.kozevatova@gmail.com
Ilan Club	Pavel Guliakov	8 674 28 613	p.guliakov@gmail.com
Knafaim Club	Pavel Guliakov	8 674 28 613	p.guliakov@gmail.com
Camp counselor school	Pavel Guliakov	8 674 28 613	p.guliakov@gmail.com
Student Union	Amit Belaite	8 693 80 038 8 692 27 326	amit.belaite@gmail.com
Young Families Club	Julija Lipšic	8 659 52 604	julija.lipšic@gmail.com
Gešer Club	Žana Skudovičienė	8 678 81 514	zanas@sc.lzb.lt
Abi men zetzich Club	Žana Skudovičienė	8 678 81 514	zanas@sc.lzb.lt
Union of Former Ghetto and Concentration Camp Prisoners	Tobijas Jafetas	(8 5) 212 7074	

## WRITE US!

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Cover Photos: Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik

With the assistance of the Jewish community of Lithuania and Moletai municipality

# Malat

## Moletai - Lithuania

### 29 August 2016 16:00

March in commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the death march in Malat 1941



29 August 1941 - The Day of the Massacre

Before WW2 the population of Malat was mostly Jewish.  
If you wish to participate in this historic march from the Malat Synagogue site to the mass grave of about 2000 Malater (1.5km)

**Please contact:**

Lietuva: Maks Dorensky - +370-675-42-255 - maks@moletaproject.com  
Israel: Tzvi Kritzer - +972-54-421-2177 - tzvi@moletaproject.com  
South Africa: Arnold Garber - +27-83-261-3627 - arnold@moletaproject.com  
Facebook: MOLETAI PROJECT Website: moletaproject.com

## BAGEL SHOP



א קלייט פון בייגל  
beigeliy krautuvėlė

### WORKING HOURS

IV 11:00 - 20:00

V 11:00 - 17:00

VI SHABBAT/CLOSED

VII 12:00 - 17:00



## USEFUL INFORMATION

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.

Guided tours of the synagogue are available daily from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. except on Saturdays. Telephone: (8 5) 261 25 23  
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