

BAGEL SHOP

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DISCOVER – GET TO KNOW – ACCEPT



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Passover Seder 14



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Dear reader,

The start of the year was full as always with state holidays and commemorative days. Not least among them--the first birthday of the Bagel Shop Café! The weather is getting warmer and promising the beginning of blooming everywhere. The slopes of the hills of Vilnius, before the trees get leaves, will be covered in a succession of blooming wildflower species. Let's remember to stop and take in their beauty. If you feel gloomy sometimes, lift your eyes to the spring sky and spend a half-day with a good book and good friends. Whatever you do, read this issue of the Bagel Shop newsletter!

We're waiting for your thoughts and suggestions for the next issues, please write: radvile@lzb.lt

Radvilė

NEWS AT A GLANCE

November 10, 2016 The Lithuanian Jewish Community hosts an exhibit of paintings called Ani Maamin (Hebrew "I believe") by young artists Isaiah Jurken and Simona Sirusaitė dedicated to the Day of Remembrance of Lithuanian Jewish Victims of Genocide.

November 23 Longtime friend of the Kaunas Jewish Community Raimundas Kaminskas and the Kaunas Council of the Lithuanian independence movement Sąjūdis hold a ceremony to commemorate Lithuanian Jewish soldiers at the Jewish cemetery in the Žaliakalnis neighborhood of Kaunas.

November 24 Conference "Lithuania and Israel: Past, Present, Future" held by Lithuanian ambassador to Israel and Lithuanian Foreign Ministry at the Peres Peace Center in Tel Aviv.

November 25 Annual Limmud educational conference held in Trakai, Lithuania, attended by LJC members from all local communities.

November 29 Plaque reading "In this building built in the 18th century the



March of Memory in Molėtai

first Lithuanian table tennis championship organized by the Makabi Athletics Club was held on March 12-13, 1927" erected on west side of the A. Martinaitis Art School, Šv. Gertrūdų street no. 33, Kaunas.

November 30-December 1 The Lithuanian embassy in London in cooperation with the University College

of London held the sixth Litvak Days there. This year the Litvak Days events were dedicated to Jewish languages and presenting linguistic heritage. Reports were delivered by academics from Lithuania, Poland, Israel, the USA and the United Kingdom.

December 6 Israeli ambassador to Lithuania Amir Maimon visited Uk-

mergė, Lithuania. Two memorial plaques unveiled during visit to commemorate notable locals: biologist Solomon Levit (1894-1938) and philologist, lexicographer and Lithuanian language standardizer Chackelis Lemchenas (1904-2001).

December 14 Memorial plaque unveiled on the Šiauliai Bank building in Šiauliai commemorating Litvak medallion and coin designer Victor David Brenner (1871-1924).

December 27 Lithuanian National Radio named writer, dramatist and director Marius Ivaškevičius their Man of the Year for 2016. He was recognized for his civic initiative in organizing a March of Memory in Molėtai, Lithuania, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the destruction of the town's Jewish community. Observers called the march a breakthrough in Lithuanians' understanding of the history of Lithuanian Jews.

January 9, 2017 Stamp celebrating 25 years of diplomatic relations between Israel and Lithuania presented at the Central Post Office in Vilnius.

January 18 The David Baazov Georgian Jewish Museum in Tbilisi, Georgia opened an exhibition called "Lithuanian Jews behind the Iron Curtain" covering the Jewish community in Lithuania during the first Soviet occupation of Lithuania.

January 19 The Lithuanian National Radio and Television gallery hosts an exhibition of photographs commemorating Righteous Gentiles who rescued Jews from the Holocaust in Lithuania.

January 24 Holocaust survivor Sulamit Lev meets and speaks with 7th- and 8th-grade students at the Pope John

Paul II Pre-Gymnasium in Vilnius as a part of international project "Face of Dialogue".

January 25 Ponar Oratorio composed by Max Fedorov performed at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic in Vilnius.

January 26 "Sounds of Silence" exhibit of photographs by Raimondas Paknys opened at the Holocaust Center in Durban, South Africa. Lithuanian ambassador Sigutė Jakštonytė said the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry event was held in solidarity with the World Jewish Congress's international #WeRemember campaign.

January 29 Waldkirch, Germany, marked International Holocaust Day with a monument to Lithuanian Jews murdered by local Karl Jäger and a film called "Karl Jäger and Us: The Long Shadow of the Holocaust in Lithuania."

February 9 Hommage à Heifetz project held fourth discussion "Vilnius, Litvak Culture in the 19th-20th Centuries and Jascha Heifetz" at the Jascha Heifetz Hall at the Lithuanian Jewish Community.

February 9 LJC, Jurbarkas regional administration and New Artists College CAN from Israel sign agreement to commemorate Synagogue Square on Kauno street in Jurbarkas, Lithuania, where once one of the most beautiful wooden synagogues in Europe stood. Memorial to be created by Israeli sculptor from Lithuania Davidas Zundelovičius.

February 11 Vanda Juknaitė named Person of Tolerance for 2016 for her efforts in Holocaust education and reconciliation.

February 13-19 Fifth annual Jascha Heifetz violin contest held in Vilnius. Japan's Yurina Arai won first prize, Ukrainian Dmytro Udovychenko second, Japan's Rennosuke Fukuda third. Japan's Mayu Ozeki and Russia's Stepan Starikov won honorable mention. This year winners were presented a small awards statue portraying Heifetz on violin by sculptor Romualdas Kvintas. Awards established by LJC.

February 16 Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė presents the Order of the Knight's Cross "For Merit to Lithuania" to Vilnius ghetto prisoner and active Holocaust educator Fania Brancovskaja on Lithuanian Independence Day.

March 16 Former Israeli ambassador to the USA and current deputy Israeli foreign minister for diplomatic matters Michael Oren visited the LJC. Oren met with chairwoman Faina Kukliansky, and asked about current events within the Community. Oren spoke the next day about Israeli foreign policy at the International Relations and Political Science Institute of Vilnius University.



F. Brancovskaja with
Lithuanian President D. Grybauskaitė



The coming of summer encourages thinking about what we've accomplished, to continue what we have begun and to undertake new work. The current period in the history of Lithuanian Jews is also like spring.

The Community, although very few Jews are left, is much more visible, more recognized and more innovative than it has ever been before. The Community's concept of external activity has become more liberal, while internal activity, financial accountability, work ethic and discipline is now controlled by stricter rules than before. This was not acceptable to all employees, unfortunately.

Decisions important to the Community are adopted collegially and are carried out by the administrative team. Money intended for activities is protected from poor bookkeeping and theft. Specialists from a number of fields work in the Community administration and volunteers help in everyday activities. Both employees and volunteers are appreciated highly for their dedication to their work, and work at the Community requires a lot of effort and a specialized knowledge.

The Community has made many efforts to get involved in human rights activities. It's strange, but this has been subject to all sorts of feelings within the Community as well. We have to remember that the victims of the Nazi regime included the disabled, Roma, homosexuals and others. I am very glad a new and progressive gen-

eration of Jews has grown up who understand the essence of human rights.

It must be admitted that we haven't managed to implement everything over the last year; we need to keep working to get rid of commemorations of alleged Holocaust perpetrators and to make sure Vilnius is graced with a monument to Righteous Gentiles. We will be discussing with the Lithuanian Government how to compensate private property seized illegally which hasn't been returned due to legal defects.

The Lithuanian State Auditor has no complaints and found no irregularities in an audit of the Goodwill Foundation for 2016. Funds disbursed by the Goodwill Foundation will not last forever. Our intention is to invest in the future, to kindle and celebrate Jewish identity and values from kindergarten to the Sholem Aleichem ORT school. With that goal in mind the Community is setting up a new pre-school educational institution. We will continue to improve the living conditions of our Social Programs Department clients. The project to support Holocaust rescuers continues. Interest in Judaism has revived. Two rabbis work at the Community who give lessons and educate young and old on different top-

ics in Judaism. We are thankful to them for their efforts to join our good group.

I am very glad that members of parliament and I were able to improve the law for providing Lithuanian citizenship to Litvaks, that we got rid of irrational requirements, and this did not harm Lithuania but did help Litvaks who want to restore their relationship of citizenship with their land of birth and that of their ancestors.

Working with the Security and Crisis Center of the European Jewish Congress and other international Jewish organizations, the LJC has strengthened security at the Community and synagogue and our video surveillance system was greatly improved. We also have a new piano and audio-visual equipment in the airy and grand Jascha Heifetz Hall at the Community, so conditions for holding cultural events at the Community have improved greatly.

At the end of March LJC partner the American Jewish Committee opened their Eastern Europe office in Warsaw. This is the fifth AJC office in Europe and covers seven European states: the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The AJC also has offices in Berlin, Brussels, Paris and Rome. We believe this is a significant event for us, for the Jews of Lithuania. After the ceremony to open the new office in Warsaw, AJC leaders travelled to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to meet government officials and Jewish community leaders.

Another important event this year: YIVO is preparing to celebrate the 120th birthday of the Bund and Zionism. Both famous movements are connected with colorful and notable Lithuanian Jewish figures. David Wolffsohn of Darbėnai, Lithuania, was an active founding member of the World Zionist Congress and is responsible for the name of the currency and flag of the State of Israel. Arkadi Kremer from Švenčionys, Lithuania, was a socialist political leader and established the Bund. Members of this movement

were in favor of the idea of rising up against the authoritarian regime of the Russian tsar.

We've already begun preparing for the European Day of Jewish Culture. The Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Department under the Ministry of Culture has adopted a theme for this year's event: "Diaspora and Heritage: The Shtetl." This is a well-reasoned, appropriate and topical choice for Lithuania, where at the end of the 1930s the life of a now formerly abundant ethno-confessional minority--the Jews--took place in the shtetls.

We collide daily with differing opinions and those who sow discord. This is unavoidable: the more you're seen, the more successful you are, the more jealousy crops up along with the conspiracy theories to which that jealousy gives birth. Jewishness doesn't need advertising, you are either a Jew or you are not. Talking a lot doesn't make a better Jew, and the best calling-card for any Jew is not his tongue, but his accomplishments, his mitzvot. Now more than ever before, the Community is open and receptive to new things, to projects which provide opportunities

for acquiring expertise from abroad and continuing education. We are grateful to have Israeli ambassador to Lithuania Amir Maimon supporting the Community's activities.

It's worth noting and celebrating a great start of the year 2017 for the LJC: due to the Community's efforts the Order of the Knight's Cross "For Merit to Lithuania" was awarded to Vilnius ghetto prisoner and active Holocaust speaker and educator Fania Brancovskaja.

*Faina Kukliansky, chairwoman
Lithuanian Jewish Community*

Rabbis' Corner

Every year before the holiday we pose ourselves many questions. Usually the most important of them is, has this holiday lost its meaning, and what lessons can we learn from it today? Undoubtedly Purim, the holiday we will soon celebrate, is primarily concerned with the danger of the destruction of the Jewish people around the world and in each separate country. In our country we remember well the horrific lessons of the mid-20th century. This is an eternal lesson learnt from this holiday.

Now, however, I'd like to address something other than that lesson. Purim is, after all, the happiest holiday when we celebrate the joy of victory rather than the bitterness of defeat. The principle of the holiday is "venahafuhu," or turning everything upside down, on its head. The bad becomes good. Likewise, good becomes bad. Purim is the holiday of the role of man in the holy process of liberation from affliction and solving problems. Our sages weren't just talking when they said if you have a problem, put off solving it until the month of Adar, the month of Purim, and you will find success in solving it. But it's not worthwhile to think the problem will solve itself. It needs to be solved, solved by the individual. We see that this is how the figures in the Book of Esther acted, Mordechai and Esther. Step by step, intrigue following intrigue, that's how they overcame the difficulties facing the nation.

I'd like to share with you a mysterious episode.

We who grew up in countries where anti-Semitism is simply part of the air we breathe are used to the idea that many Jews hide their Jewishness. Or at least we don't bring it up in certain situations. And so we have a completely different understanding of Esther hiding from her betrothed, the king, her Jewish roots. As the Book of Esther says: "Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it" (Esther 2:10). We understand this, it seems, as meaning she was afraid of anti-Semitism. But it wasn't exactly like that. Back then there was no anti-Semitism in general at all. She did not indicate her people at all. But how did the king's fiancée manage to avoid a background check, to make it so there was no question posed as to her origins? As it goes in the old joke: "Are you a Jew?" "No. what are you talking about, I'm a Russian!"... We're not talking about a lie, but in general about hiding one's origins. So the king didn't know from where his bride came. One thing was clear: in ancient Persia there were 127 different lands and provinces, and Esther must have been born in one of them. If she weren't a Jew, then she was a Hindu or an Ethiopian (these countries were described as the easternmost and westernmost reaches of the king of the Persian Empire). Somehow she avoided the truth without lying. And in the end the king (the very king!) married a girl without ethnicity or relatives. How could this have happened?



Kalev Krelin. Photo: Eugenijus Barzdžius

The answer to this question might help us understand an important lesson which we need to learn from the Purim celebration in our own day.

The king has an obvious problem: for three years now he has ruled a vast empire comprised of 127 provinces. It is not easy to rule. And he needs to take a wife. But a wife, from wherever she comes, will represent one of those 127 nations. That means the king would be granting priority to one specific nation. And all of a sudden a girl appears who does not say she belongs to any nation. Of course the girl can't be completely without ethnicity, but she shows it has no meaning at all to her. For the king this is a real find. That's just what he needs!

Of course it later turns out that things aren't so simple. And Esther has to decide anyway how to tell the king she is a Jew. But that's a different story.

The lesson which we learn from this story is such: when people attempt to hide their roots, their origin, they become comfortable and unthreatening. Of course Esther's actions were part of the plan to "invade" the royal palace in order to save the Jews in the future. But the principle remains

the same. We become comfortable and convenient when we hide our origin and forget who we are. And then even protesting against anti-Semitism doesn't suit us, for we have no ethnicity after all. It doesn't concern us. But when we remind ourselves and others who we are, our opinions and beliefs have to be considered.

I'd like to add this applies to people of all ethnicities. Not just Jews, but other peoples who have at various times in history

had the desire to bow their heads and pretend "this doesn't concern us."

Incidentally, we very often have the desire to pretend we aren't connected when we feel ashamed of our people. This wonderful and happy Purim holiday I wish you to do everything so that we aren't ashamed to be Jews, and that the people surrounding us might feel the same.

A freilekhen Purim!

Rabbi Kalev Krelin

Interview

I've Been Getting Along Nicely with Children at the LJC for Two Years Now

Alina Azukaitis is the mother of two teen-agers and has been pursuing a career as a teacher for six years now. "My priority in this stage of life is teacher studies. These are a big source of inspiration in my work life at the pre-school called "Vaikystės sodas" [Garden of Childhood]. I exert a lot of time and energy on my studies. It's always difficult to balance family and work, but I think I can do it." Alina began working with the children at the LJC Dubi Mishpakha club after participating at Community pre-school camps. Although she wasn't that involved with the community in her youth, Alina is now glad to have the opportunity to be part of the chain linking the very smallest members of the Community. She granted an interview to the Bagel Shop newsletter.

Dubi Club was established in 2003. How have the club's activities shifted over that time? How many children participate? What educational principles do you follow and what, how and why do you teach the little ones?

As far as I understand it, children of different ages have been meeting since the club began. Later they tried to separate the smaller ones into the Dubi Mishpakha Club, but it stopped operating. Currently Dubi Mishpakha Children's Club is accepting children from 2 to 4. But the very youngest are 2 and the oldest 6, and they still like to come to the club, they desire to help during activity time, and the youngest are always aligned with the oldest. I am happy about this. These are the benefits of a mixed-age group. Usually about 10 children attend the group. The goal of our club as with that of the LJC is to build community and create friendly relationships. My personal goal is to create the right kind of atmosphere so children when they wake up on the weekend would wake their parents up and ask them to take them to the club. It's important it be comfortable and safe for the children, and especially the toddlers. So they can play, try out new activi-

ties and learn freely.

Reading about Jewish pedagogy one often encounters this goal: "to teach the child to be a real Jew." What does that mean? How much of your activities is devoted to Judaism and traditional holidays?

In Club activity I try to teach about Jewishness. I say, "We Jews celebrate Sukkot" and so on. It's important to point this out to children from the very earliest years. We celebrate both Jewish and Lithuanian holidays. We drew Lithuanian flags to celebrate February 16. There are many mixed families who don't necessarily choose Jewish upbringing, or simply don't think about it, don't think it's important. And perhaps not all families who bring their children to the club have even told them they're Jews. Every individual, every family has the right to choose. I am especially glad we have begun having discussions with the children, whether they are Jewish or not, or their father or mother is... It's very pleasant to the ear when four-year-olds talk about this. It's amazing that the child's ethnic identity is already forming at that age. It is a happy club tradition to celebrate some holidays together as a

group. Three children's clubs celebrated Purim. That's an opportunity for everyone to get together, get to know one another and to see our Community is not so small after all.

LJC has a number of clubs including Dubi, Dubi Mishpakha, Ilan and Kfafaim. How do they differ and what activities do they offer? Who is allowed to participate and what time of year do they start?

Each club is for a certain age group corresponding to skills and interests. There are more activities at the club for older kids and they go on longer. Smaller ones have shorter attention spans so activities have to shift to keep them interested and engaged. We always have sensory activities for the smaller children so they can touch as many different things as possible, play with beads and sand, glue things and do it without fear of spilling on the floor or soiling clothes. I also try to get kids interested in experiments, which the children always await eagerly. After activities the children always cheerfully pitch in and sweep and tidy up.

All children of Lithuania Jewish Community members may attend and can come when they want. Information and contact information is available on the LJC bulletin board, you only have to announce when you'll come. Activities are free. The club season begins in fall, usually after Rosh Hashanah, and lasts until spring.

There is talk about the Jewish educational phenomenon, that unconditional love and trust in one's child is the main reason we have so many Jewish geniuses in the world. Is that true? There are all sorts of schools of thought on teaching in the modern world and young parents are often unsure which is best for their children. Could you recommend three books which would help parents raise successful children?

In answering that question, I would like to say that these are matters which are essential in raising a child. I mean unconditional love, no matter how the child behaves, he must feel loved. I'm not talking about the consequences of inappropriate be-

havior, which I think are a must. There are certain standards of behavior acceptable in the family, and societal standards, so we teach the child to recognize the difference. Faith in child from a young age teaches the child self-respect and self-confidence. Parents today try to "make the child dance" from all sides. You still hear phrases such as "Don't run, you'll fall!", "I told you, don't climb, you'll hurt yourself." I think we need to let the child make mistakes, to experience failure and to try many times before getting something right. I devote a lot of attention to fostering independence. I let the children open up their lunch boxes and drinks themselves, I let them pour juice for their friends. How else will they learn? And so what if something spills... Yes, it spills. And it might take ten attempts to open a bottle of juice. When the child does it, he shines with a sense of accomplishment, and we can only be happy for him and encourage more of the same. I let them clean the tables and throw the garbage from the table away. These are very small things, but endlessly important. Do what you can do yourself! And you can! Let's not deprive our children of this.

To raise a successful person... What does a successful person mean? Is a successful person a happy person? ... I recommend reading Rudolf Dreikurs's "Happy Children: Challenge to Parents." It's a book which discusses communication between parents and children and examines the reasons behind certain behaviors. It contains a very good explanation of empowerment, encouragement. Janusz Korczak's "King Matt" (Król Maciuś) is a wonderful book which discusses trust and confidence in the child and the responsibility which the child wants to and can assume. I would recommend one more book which is available in all bookshops. It's Malcolm Gladwell's "Outliers: The Story of Success." This book really does compel thinking about matters which sometimes unexpectedly put our life on the path to success. What are they? I sincerely hope you can find them.

Interview by Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik



IN LIVING MEMORY

The world remembered the victims of human brutality--broken dreams, lives cut short--again on January 26, International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Bagel Shop presents the testimonies of two Lithuanian Jewish Community members who survived the Holocaust, Estera Grobman and Ruvin Zeligman.

ESTERA KLABINAITĖ GROBMAN was born in November of 1920 in Kaunas to a well-to-do Jewish family who lived in their own home on Vaisių street. She had two brothers and there were three generations living under one roof: grandparents, parents and children. She calls herself a Kaunas native and her mother and father owned a small bakery in Kaunas. Estera inherited her love of books from her father and to the present reads in four languages: Yiddish, Lithuanian, Russian and German.

Estera: We lived in Kaunas next to the Saulė building and the Jewish gymnasium was next to Aleksotas bridge, very far away. The state Lithuanian school wasn't accessible to Jews, they only accepted a few, so the children went to the Jewish gymnasium which cost money. Later they opened a Jewish-Lithuanian gymnasium in Kaunas, where everything was taught in Lithuanian. I was graduated in 1938. Jews didn't have much to do with Lithuanians. We didn't feel anti-Semitism, but sometimes it used to manifest itself... But when I entered Vilnius University to study chemistry, then I learned what hatred is. Students from different disciplines used to assemble in the auditorium. There were those who didn't like it, who asked, why are there Jews sitting in the front row? They said the Jews' place is only in the corner, and probably 10 percent were Jews. ... I remember Lithuanian teachers who never lost an opportunity to make fun of Jews. I won't say their names, some of them became famous scholars. ...

After the ghetto was set up, the Germans issued an order for all families to assemble in the square in Vilijampolė and to leave their doors unlocked. They sent us to dig earth at the Aleksotas aerodrome. The work was difficult and to get there you had to walk 6 kilometers, and the same distance back. ... My mother was a very intelligent woman. She taught us not to be jealous and to help. I realized there are all sorts of people. Upright people remained upright in the ghetto, they didn't steal a piece of bread from others. ...

In 1943 Estera was removed from the Kaunas ghetto and sent with others to the Aleksotas labor camp. The Jews were deported to concentration camps in the west in July, 1944: the men to Dachau, the women to Stutthof.

Estera: When we arrived we exited the wagons and we saw Germans with the black SS uniform. I hadn't seen such in Lithuania. ...initially I was with my parents and brother. There we found female Polish prisoners living, who told us: "Oh how good, now they're not killing." We saw a large pile of children's shoes. ... All of us were taken through a gauntlet of Germans standing there

to the showers. They ordered us to take off all our clothes, and after we'd washed they gave us rough, long shirts and a long robe, but confiscated our clothes and shoes. Instead of shoes, some got clogs, some got better things than others. ... I was with mother for a month, then they separated us and I was left with my sister-in-law. They issued us better clothes and took us to dig anti-tank ditches. Mother stayed behind the camp, they murdered her. My brother and father were taken to Dachau, where they were murdered. ... After the war I discovered my [other] brother, he served in the 16th Division. ...

After liberation I was in hospital. Everyone was sick with typhus when we got to the hospital. I showed them my foot, they said it might be gangrene. They treated me for a long time and healed me.

Estera: Every three months security in Vilnius would check me, since the Russians didn't issue a passport. ... I was barely alive

and not able to work. I lived with my brother and his wife... In December that same year I married my fiancée Kolev Grobman who had fought at the front in the Lithuanian 16th Division. We all lived in a wooden house on Krokvos street, water from a well, heating with coal. Horrible nightmares tortured me in the nights. For many years I jerked around during my sleep in fear, I kept seeing the Germans in my dreams. It's difficult to even talk about it.



E. Klabinaite-Grobman. Photo: Milda Rūkatė

RUVIN ZELIGMAN is the sole survivor of approximately 1,500 Šilalė Jews murdered in the Holocaust. He was 10 when World War II began in Lithuania in 1941. He was 10 when WWII began. Although he hasn't lived in Šilalė for many years now, when he speaks he still falls into the samogitian dialect. His wife also comes from the region and they speak in dialect at home.

Ruvín: At that time about 60% of Šilalė's population was Jewish. My father was a religious figure: the cantor, mohel [performer of circumcision], a religious teacher and a reznik [a man educated in the rules of kosher slaughter]. My father graduated from the famous Telz yeshiva. He was a respected man and he helped the local residents of Šilalė with his knowledge of medicine, healing the sick. There were four of us children in the family. Mother took care of the home and the children. We lived well... ... The Šilalė Jewish community was very affluent. Even though it is a small town, there were more than 10 Jewish shops there, including a shoe store, a shop selling material, two butcher shops and a number of food stores which sold on credit. I remember during the Sabbath on Saturdays Jewish shopkeepers were not allowed to accept money, so they used to say: "Put your money down here and take what you need." All Jews spoke Yiddish, and there were some who didn't know Lithuanian, but we played and had Lithuanian friends, so we learned Lithuanian. ... I did well at school. I went to a Jewish religious school next to the synagogue where there were four grades taught in the same classroom. My sister attended the gymnasium.

We were raised religiously at home. I remember Sabbath. We picked up, cleaned up the house, but as the sun was setting Friday evening, no work allowed, it was holy. Mother set the table, stretched out a white tablecloth, always lit the candles, baked challa, prepared fish and the special Sabbath dish cholent. We used to take it to the baker. They baked bread in the oven there and we used to put the pot in so it would stay hot, and Saturday morning, on the way back from synagogue, we would take it, go home and eat. I can taste even now how delicious it was. ... We've tried to make it at home, my wife and I, but we don't end up with cholent, we get Georgian [sic, Armenian] chanakh instead! (laughs).

Because Šilalė is not far from the German border [before World War II], the Germans invaded on the very first day of the war, on June 22. People tried to flee, but not all were able. There were Germans who lived in Šilalė before the war with whom we got along well, so no one expected it to be so horrible. We tried to run, but didn't get far. The Germans caught up with us. We went back.

The behavior of Lithuanians did change. It was bad. We lived with our landlords who had rented us half of their home. They wanted to hide us, but didn't have any place to put us. The Ger-

mans immediately began to mock Jews... White armbanders from surrounding villages suddenly appeared, and there were a great many of them. ... Many of them fled to Germany after the war, and after that to America. My sister attended the gymnasium. During summer vacation she wanted to earn some money and got a job at the post office as a telegrapher. A boy from her class went there and killed her.

On July 6 they herded Jews into the synagogue. The white armbanders threw grenades in through the windows at night. My father was wounded, my brother died, I hid in a closet and I was fortunate, I survived. The next day they took us to the Jewish cemetery. They began to shoot everyone and I saw my father fall into a pit... Then the synagogue caretaker, Sames, bit the guard in the throat. Chaos ensued and that's when I waded through the river and hid. That's how I was the only one to survive. ... I went home. At that time a German came to take our things. The white armbanders stole everything, they took beds away for themselves since they were beautiful beds, golden goblets, they took everything. ... I didn't know where to run.



R. Zeligman Lights the Candles for All Killed Šilalė Jews in Vilnius Choral Synagogue

At that time the women and children hadn't been murdered yet. I went to them and lived there for more than a month. In August they took the women and children away, telling them to take as much property as possible, and marched them to the Tubyniai forest where two large pits had been dug. ... There was a creek nearby, and it ran red with blood, all the water was red. ...

I managed to escape. Perhaps God wanted me to survive. I was small, thin. I knew my mother's relatives lived in the town of Varniai, I fled through the forest to them and slept in the forest at night. They marched all the Jews into the Telšiai ghetto, and I ended up there, too. Before New Year's I found out they would liquidate the ghetto and the women told me to run... ... I moved to the Žvingiai settlement where I hid during the whole war. My rescuers, Povilas and Marijona Stonkai, they were given awards for rescuing me, given the title of Righteous Gentiles. I hid until October, 1944, until liberation.

[After the war] I returned to Šilalė. The Lašaitis family again helped me, and found me a place with some farmers who lived 3.5 kilometers outside Šilalė. I helped them with all the farm work. After I was graduated from school, I wanted to continue studying, but there wasn't enough money. What can you do? They appointed me a teacher I saved my salary, I taught for a year and the children loved me. After saving for a year I could go to Vilnius to study. I matriculated at the Physics and Mathematics Faculty of Vilnius University and chose physics as my major. ... I have a wonderful wife and we have a wonderful life together. Our daughter lives in Israel now. I have two great-grandchildren.

Both Holocaust survivors interviewed by Ilona Rūkienė

The “Policy” of the Lithuanian Provisional Government and the Beginning of the Holocaust in Lithuania

*Last fall the Lithuanian parliament hosted an academic conference called "They Recued Lithuanian Jews, They Saved Lithuania's Honor" to mark the Day of Remembrance of Lithuanian Jewish Victims of Genocide. Dr. Algimantas Kasparavičius, senior academic at the Lithuanian History Institute, delivered a presentation about the anti-Semitic actions of the Provisional Government of Lithuania. We present extracts from his presentation here."**



A. Kasparavičius

The greatest 20th century tragedy really came upon Lithuania not in June of 1940, when freedom and statehood was lost, but a year later when the Holocaust began in Nazi-occupied Lithuania. The greatest 20th-century tragedy for Lithuania is the destruction of the Jewish community which had lived for half of a millennium and had created a civic Lithuanian identity. Even the loss of national statehood is not an irreversible process, as shown by the experience of many peoples. When a nation loses statehood during critical historical circumstances, after the geopolitical situation changes for the better it is possible to restore it. That's what Lithuania did as well on March 11, 1990. But the former Lithuanian Jewish Litvak community, rich in all senses, will never be restored, unfortunately. And that can only mean one thing, that our Lithuania, which for many Lithuanians still represents, as Dr. Jonas Basanavičius said, “the home of the people,” will remain diminished, darker, emptier, weaker and more fragile. In terms of civilization. Emotionally. Culturally. Demographically. Geopolitically.

In the first half of the last century the political-diplomatic elite of the First Republic (1918-1940), its most prominent representatives saw their greatest ally for Lithuanian statehood in the figure of the Litvak. On the eve of the Litvaks' greatest tragedy in Lithuania, a youngest signatory to the February 16 act of Lithuanian independence and one of the most prominent Lithuanian diplomats in

the era between the two world wars, the ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania in Paris, Petras Klimas ... perceived the Jewish role in and significance for Lithuania's culture in this way, and formulated their relationship with the Lithuanian state similarly: *“If we want to Lithuania-nize Vilnius, we must first bend the Jews to the side of the Lithuanian state, not in the sense of their becoming Lithuanians, but so that they could stand up for and vote for Lithuania. The Lithuanian people can have no interest in transforming Jews into Lithuanians, for such a nationalization of the Jews always results in an abortion to anti-Semitism, as that has happened in Germany. We must learn 'out of patriotism' to sacrifice much to the Jews so they wouldn't be opposed the Lithuanian state or be indifferent on Vilnius. Later, when the storms of this war have passed and we will remain with Vilnius for the longer period, we will always find a modus vivendi with the Jews, without harm to the development of our nation. ... There will be no danger to Lithuania if Vilnius for a time is the Jerusalem of Lithuania, but a Jerusalem which stands with Lithuania. ... In the eyes of the world Lithuania will never lose if the majority of Vilnius residents, that is the Lithuanians and the Jews, there defend together their country on a basis of equality.”*¹

Later in the years of World War II, i.e., from the fall of 1940 onwards, in essence two main strategies crystallized in the Lithuanian political struggle for return/restoration of independent statehood.

The first could be called provisionally the revolutionary or pro-German strategy. To put it more precisely, the pro-Nazi strategy of restoration of partial Lithuanian statehood which called for and preferred the path of armed restoration of Lithuanian statehood in political and military cooperation with the Third Reich. The second strategy, on the other hand, is most accurately defined, it would appear, as clearly oriented towards the anti-Hitler coalition and could be called the diplomatic strategy: application of the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the absolute and unconditional restoration of Lithuanian statehood.

As shown by rather abundant surviving archival sources, memoirs and historiography, the pro-German² (more accurately pro-Nazi, since in principle there existed no other Germany at that time operating in the international arena as real geopolitical power) concept and strategy of liberation from Soviet occupation and annexation and restoration of the Lithuanian state² began to form during the first days of the Soviet occupation, i.e., the end of June, 1940, mainly at the initiative of Lithuanian diplomat in Berlin colonel Kazys Škirpa.³ It was at his initiative and due to his efforts that the Lithuanian Activist Front was established in Berlin on November 17, 1940.

These tactics and strategies were rather simple and consisted of exploiting the advent of the German-Soviet war and the Wehrmacht's invasion of Lithuania and

following in the geopolitical wake of the Third Reich to organize a mass anti-Soviet uprising in Lithuania and to proclaim the formation of a Provisional Government and the restoration of an independent Lithuanian state. ... [A]s the moment of the fateful German-Soviet collision drew near, in the spring of 1941 the LAF noticeably intensified their anti-Soviet and often at the same time anti-Jewish/anti-Semitic propaganda with threats to do away with the Jews⁴, adopted a political resolution on organizing a future National Labor Security [TDA] battalion in Lithuania, and on April 22 formed the Provisional Government with colonel Škirpa as its titular head.

Looking back at the events of the summer of 1941 historically and without getting bogged down in examinations of the details of the June 23 uprising and the activities of the Provisional Government, one can say that politically the uprising and the Provisional Government, and later the whole pro-German strategy of restoration of the Lithuanian state, then experienced fatal historical failure. ... Over almost seven weeks of their operations neither the insurgents nor the Provisional Government acquired any real political power or international recognition. ... Although neither the local military occupational government in Kaunas, much less the civilian Nazi administration in Berlin, opened or maintained any official ties with the Lithuanian Provisional Government ... to implement their policies in Lithuania they gladly made use of the political shortsightedness, moral/ethical conformity and blindness of the Provisional Government as well as its authority in the politically damaged eyes of Lithuanian society and the Quisling structures set up and nominally administered by

them, from the *kommandanturen*, police, National Labor Security battalion, Ethnic Training Board and etc., to the district and aldermanship administrations.

By their June 25, 1941, meeting, the Provisional Government resolved to “move towards the organization of police in Kaunas, and expand partisan activities in the countryside where gangs of Bolsheviks, Communists and Jews still remain.”⁵ ... For instance, the Alytus TDA platoon noted in their operations report for the beginning of July that “according to reports from citizens 36 Communists, 9 Red Army soldiers and a larger number of Jews had been apprehended and are in detention.”⁶ It’s characteristic the Lithuanian official accurately listed the number of Communists and Red Army soldiers arrested without bothering to count the Jews arrested. ...

On July 16, 1941, Alytus district police chief and aviation captain Stasys Stasys Krasnickas-Krosniūnas gave a speech to his subordinates: “Jewry, as an inbred people who under the red banner as a cover want to enslave all of humanity through the means of the highest kind of sadism and turn us into animals, has been very quickly dealt with through the radical measures of the führer of the German people. We must consider that this problem has already been solved, but there still appears one or another Lithuanian, even a police officer, who attempts to solve this problem in their own way. I tell you there can not be two different opinions on this problem. There is and should be only one opinion, it must be executed 100%, and it is clearly set out in Adolf Hitler’s book *Mein Kampf*.”⁷

The minutes of the June 27 meeting of the Provisional Government also speak eloquently of their view on the infamous events at the Lietūkis garage ... the Pro-

visional Government, didn’t even attempt to stop the massacre or protest against it, and only resolved: “*despite all the measures which must be taken against the Jews because of their Communist activities and harm they’re doing to the German military, partisans and individual residents are to avoid public executions of Jews.*”⁸

On June 30 the Provisional Government ... [gave] their blessing to the building of a Jewish concentration camp with all the ensuing political and ethical consequences to that. “*To approve the establishment of a Jewish concentration camp and to assign the task of its establishment to Mr. Švilpa, deputy minister of public works, in cooperation with Mr. colonel Bobelis.*”⁹

Not less important nor historically less significant was the afternoon sitting of the Provisional Government that same day, where they considered the Government’s “*Declaration on Economic and Social Affairs.*”¹⁰ ... the third point in the declaration emphasizes the economic policy discrimination, perhaps even racism, which the Provisional Government intended to carry out. It states “*Property nationalized from Jews and Russians remains the indisputable property of the Lithuanian state.*”¹¹

...It’s significant that in July of 1941 in adopting laws discriminating against other ethnicities and especially Jews, the Provisional Government had in effect almost assigned themselves the role of God in Nazi occupied and administered Lithuania. For instance, the “*Law on the Denationalization of the Fleet of the Lithuanian Merchant Marine and Inland Waters*” adopted by the Government on July 29 contains the high-sounding declaration: “*Who is considered a Jew or another person who operates against the interests of the Lithuanian people is determined by the Cabinet of Ministers.*”¹² ... on July 3, 4, 15, 17, 19 and 29 [of

1 Secret report by plenipotentiary Lithuanian ambassador to Paris Petras Klimas dated February 18, 1940, to Lithuanian foreign minister Juozas Urbšys// Lithuanian Central State Archives, folio 648, folder 1, case 31, pp. 196, 199–200.

2 Arūnas Bubnys, *Provokiška Lietuvos valstybės atkūrimo vizija (1940–1944)*, in: *Lietuvos diplomacija XX amžiuje*, Vilnius: Vaga, 1999, p. 133.

3 Kazys Škirpa, *Sukilimas Lietuvos suverenitetui atstatyti. Dokumentinė apžvalga*, Vašingtonas: Printed by Franciscan Fathers Press, 1973, pp. 19–20.

4 Valentinas Brandišauskas, *Siekiai atkurti Lietuvos valstybingumą (1940 06-1941 09)*, Vilnius: Valstybinis leidybos centras, 1996, pp. 36–38.

5 Minutes no. 2 of the meeting of the meeting of the cabinet of ministers of the Provisional Government of Lithuania for 5:10 to 5:20 P.M. on June 25, 1941, in: *Lietuvos Laikinoji Vyriausybė. Posėdžių protokolai* [Provisional Government of Lithuania: Minutes of Meetings], edited by Dr. Arvydas Anušauskas, Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, 2001, p. 11.

6 Letter from Alytus district administrator A. Audronys of July 17, 1941, to the interior minister of the Provisional Government of Lithuania, in: Lithuanian

Central State Archive [hereinafter LCSA], f. R-1436, ap. 1, b. 29, l. 69.

7 *Masinės žudynės Lietuvoje* [Mass Murder in Lithuania], volume 2, p. 63. Cf.: A. Bubnys, *Holokaustas Lietuvos provincijoje 1941 metais*, p. 12

8 Minutes no. 5 of the meeting of the cabinet of ministers of the Provisional Government of Lithuania on June 27, 1941, in: *Lietuvos Laikinoji Vyriausybė. Posėdžių protokolai*, Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, 2001, p. 17.

9 Minutes no. 6 of the morning of June 30 of the Provisional Government of Lithuania on June 30, 1941, in: *Ibid.*, p. 19–20.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

11 Minutes no. 7 of the afternoon of June 30, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: *Ibid.*, p. 21–22.

12 Appendix 2 to the Law on the Denationalization of the Fleet of the Lithuanian Merchant Marine and Inland Waters in minutes no. 27 of July 29, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: *Ibid.*, p. 132.

1941] the Provisional Government adopted reams of resolutions discriminatory to Jews and Poles, closed down the state theaters in Kaunas and Vilnius¹³ and nationalized the moveable assets, real estate and means of production of Jews.¹⁴

In the July 28 sitting the Provisional Government began deliberations on what are perhaps the best known and most infamous regulations in Lithuania, the “Regulations on the Status of the Jews,” in order to finally “solve the Jewish problem uniformly throughout Lithuania.”¹⁵ ... By August 1, 1941, the tragic document had been adopted. Its preamble states: “The Cabinet of Ministers, taking into consideration that Jews for whole centuries have

exploited the Lithuanian people economically, ruined it morally and most recently covering themselves in the mantle of Bolshevism have engaged broadly in war against Lithuanian independence and the Lithuanian nation, and seeking to put a stop to the harmful activities of the Jews and to protect the Lithuanian people from their harmful influence, do hereby adopt these regulations...”¹⁶

Although the Provisional Government disappeared from the Lithuanian political landscape relatively quickly in the summer of 1941, the ethno-political signals they had sent and their political posture in the face of tragedy and the political and administrative resolutions they adopted

traveled on. The process continued and spread autonomously. And the devilish machinery bore its fruit.

In total during World War II 195,000-196,000 Jewish citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, i.e., about 95% of all Jews resident in Lithuania, were murdered. During 1941 alone, that is, during the first half-year of the Nazi occupation, during which the Provisional Government of Lithuania operated for just less than six weeks, 101,996 Lithuanians citizens of Jewish origin were exterminated in the Lithuanian countryside (not counting the larger cities of Vilnius, Kaunas, Šiauliai and Panevėžys). People who lived here and loved and built Lithuania for centuries.¹⁷

13 Minutes no. 10 of July 4, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 36–37; Minutes no. 18 of July 15, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 80; Appendix 1 to the Law on the Denationalization of Land in minutes no. 20 of July 17, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 90; Minutes no. 22 of July 19, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 95–96; Appendix 2 of the Law on the Denationalization of City Buildings and Plots of Land in minutes no. 22 of July 19, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 99; Appendix 3 to the Law on the Denationalization of Mercantile and Public Feeding Enterprises in Minutes no. 22 of July 19, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 101.

14 Appendix 1 to the Minutes no. 7 of the afternoon of June 30, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 23

15 Minutes no. 26 of July 28, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 123.

16 Regulation on the Status of the Jews: appendix 1 to minutes no. 31 of July 1, 1941, of the Provisional Government of Lithuania in: Ibid., p. 135.

17 Arūnas. Bubnys, Holokaustas Lietuvos provincijoje 1941 metais, pp. 307–309.

*You can find a full four part historical review on lzb.lt

Reconstruction of Palace of Sports Poses No Threat to Šnipiškės Jewish Cemetery

In light of the recent intensification of statements in the media on the alleged danger now threatening the conservation of the Šnipiškės Jewish graveyard in Vilnius (hereinafter Cemetery), the Lithuanian Jewish (Litvak) Community (hereinafter LJC) feel it our duty yet again to present the main facts in the case and the LJC’s well-founded position based on those facts regarding the issue of the reconstruction of the Vilnius Palace of Concerts and Sports (hereinafter Sports Palace) and its adaptation as a conference center.

To date no work for the reconstruction of the Sports Palace has been carried out, and therefore no possibly negative impact on the graveyard which was destroyed in the 1950s is being effected at the current time. The remains of the Vilna Gaon were removed to the Vilnius Jewish cemetery located on Sudervės street long ago and his headstone is located there. According



Reconstruction of Sports Palace haven't started yet

to the original construction documents for the Sports Palace presented to the LJC, the foundation of the building extends 7.37 meters under ground, so any

burials there were likely destroyed during construction. Pre-planning proposals for reconstruction of the Sports Palace are based on the assumption there are no

burials remaining under the building. Based on these proposals a detailed technical project for the renovation and reconstruction of the Sports Palace is to be drafted which will be carefully studied and assessed by the competent relevant institutions.

Since 2006 the Sports Palace building and the Cemetery upon which it was built have been declared a state-protected site and protected. The abandoned Sports Palace does not cast the city center or the Cemetery in the best light, and the building as it falls apart has become a symbol recalling the blood-curdling Soviet era when the Cemetery headstones were destroyed and the burials disturbed.

All construction and reconstruction work in the Cemetery territory and the buffer zone around it are considered carefully and are strictly controlled based on the tenets of Lithuanian law on the protection of real estate cultural heritage and the specific requirements of the special plan for the protection of the Cemetery. This special plan was drafted based on the requirements and principles set in an agreement concluded on August 26, 2009, by the leadership and management of the LJC, the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe and the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Department under the Ministry of Culture. All of the parties share responsibility for adherence to the agreement and have sufficient authorization to ensure that. Any earth-moving work may only happen under the supervision of an archaeologist and an LJC delegate. To insure conformance to this requirement, the LJC coordinates all decisions regarding the protection of the Cemetery and plans for the reconstruction of the Sports Palace with the consent and agreement of the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe.

Even though there is no real probability that graves remain under the building, in the event of reconstruction of the Sports Palace the LJC will strive to insure any earth-moving work is of minimal scope and that it would be supervised by representatives of the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe.

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania has the right to dispose of the property it owns and certainly has the right to weigh options for reconstructing the Sports Palace for one or another use, and the LJC has neither a legal basis nor rational arguments to hinder these activities. Instead of unconstructive criticism, the LJC is taking all measures to insure these plans do not result in violations of Jewish law and tradition, and believes the Government of Lithuania as a responsible party and an institution with a vested interest in its own reputation will also exhaust all efforts to insure the project is carried out with the highest level of transparency and quality and with the highest respect for heritage protection.

If the project is implemented appropriately, the LJC will achieve our goal of preserving the Cemetery:

- 1) establishing in city planning and physically demarcating the limits of the Cemetery;
- 2) renovating the territory of the Cemetery and setting up walking paths there in line with Jewish law and tradition;
- 3) erecting a commemorative composition including the names of the people buried in the Cemetery;
- 4) installing necessary educational and information material on site.



Old Šnipiškės Cemetery Memorial

As 2016 drew to a close, the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe issued a statement expressing an appreciation of changes which have taken place in Lithuanian society and among Lithuanian officials regarding Jewish cemeteries, Jewish Holocaust mass murder sites and the need to protect them.

"We feel it is important in this context to emphasize the major transformation that we have recently experienced in our work after so many years of campaigning and taking action to protect Jewish graves in Europe. This fundamental change is reflected in our experiences in Lithuania over the past month. It is impossible to describe ... the range of difficulties, obstructions, obstinacy and deception which was faced by our representatives in earlier years when attempting to protect Jewish graves in Lithuania. Not only was there no sympathy and understanding for our efforts to save Jewish cemeteries and graves, but our representations were often faced with ridicule. Even after being convinced of our genuine concern for these matters, our appeals were not taken seriously and all kinds of ploys and untruths were used to avoid taking meaningful action. But fortunately, times have changed. Not only does the current Lithuanian Government central leadership treat the CPJCE and its requests with seriousness and respect, but even the government departments dealing with economy, transport, interior affairs etc, all show deep consideration for Jewish cemetery protection. During the past month, the CPJCE office received an appeal for assistance from the Lithuanian authorities regarding a proposed widening of a railway track, which may possibly have encroached on the area of a Jewish mass-grave. They assured the CPJCE that they did not want to disturb the burial site and requested the CPJCE to come and establish the exact location of the grave in order to ensure that it is not affected in any way."

Bagel Shop Café Celebrates First Birthday

The time has passed so quickly. It seems just yesterday we were making our first bagels under rabbinical supervision and the hallways of the Lithuanian Jewish Community were filled with the aroma of fresh baking. A year later it's no longer possible to count how many bagels we've put in the oven, how many sandwiches we've made and how much hummus, imberlakh, lekakh and other sweets have been sampled. Time and space has appeared for meeting, sincerely asking how the another is doing and listening to the answer. The Kaziukas Fair has again come to Vilnius and fair-goers could for the second year now buy real bagels.

The Bagel Shop Café was also noticed by travellers and the media. Chuck Hughes who does a series of cooking shows on Canadian television came to shoot an episode at the café. He learned to make teiglakh here. He said he's a big fan of Jewish cooking, which he thinks of as home cooking, the kind grand-ma used to make, slowly, getting involved with the process, unlike modern fast food. He said he's happy eating Jewish food and his mother-in-law is Jewish. Before coming to Vilnius he thought it would be interesting, and he came away saying it was very good and delicious.

Photographer, writer and traveller Yevgeny Golomolzin from St. Petersburg, Russia, said although the café is small, it's very orig-



inal. He said it felt like home, with books and knick-knacks on the shelves. You can read while drinking coffee and buy a Jewish calendar or a Hebrew word-book, he noted. Golomolzin said the attraction wasn't the books, but the real Jewish treats and bagels.

Stop by, we're at Pylimo street no. 4 in Vilnius.
You're always welcome.

PASSOVER SEDER

Passover is a holiday celebrated in spring beginning on the 15th day of Nissan (for 7 days in Israel and 8 days in the Diaspora) which is about the exodus from Egypt. Torah scholars often explain this holiday as the birth of the nation accompanied by birth pangs--the ten plagues upon Egypt or *makkot*, the last of which, the sacrifice of a lamb, gave the holiday its name, *Pesakh*, from Hebrew *pasah*, to pass over, to let go. It is a complete misunderstanding for Christians to call the holiday "Jewish Easter."

The Passover holiday begins with an evening Seder (a specially-prepared ritual dinner) during which children are taught about the flight from Egypt. According to Mishnah Pesachim (10:4) children at the dinner pose four questions abbreviated as "How is this night

different from all other nights?" which the father is supposed to answer. The questions and answers and entire ritual of the dinner were codified over time and are called the Haggadah shel Pesakh or more often simply Haggadah.

Certain items prepared before the sun sets are placed upon the special Passover platter called the *keara*: a boiled egg symbolizing the *hagigah* or special sacrifice accompanying the paschal lamb sacrifice which was brought to the Temple during the great pilgrimage holidays of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot; across from it on the right side of the plate the *zeroah* which is a cooked piece of kosher meat with a bone recalling the paschal lamb; between the egg and the *zeroah* is the *marror*, or bitter herbs; below that on the right are placed the *kharoset*, which

is a thick mix of mashed apple, almonds, cinnamon, ginger, walnuts and wine, recalling among other things the clay with which the Israelite slaves were forced to make bricks in Egypt.

On the left under the egg and across from the *kharoset* is placed the *karpas* (not-so-bitter leafy vegetables such as celery and radishes but also even potatoes). Finally, at the bottom, below the *kharoset* and *karpas* and almost midway between them is placed the *khazaret*, which is lettuce leaves or another vegetable and may be marror, or bitter herbs, as well. All three items placed at the bottom of the *keara* complement the upper three, which are the main items for the Seder ritual as established by the sages.

On the Seder table there are set before the ritual four cups of wine, matzo, salt

water (recalling salty tears) and candles. Besides goblets for all the participants, a further vessel of wine is set for the prophet Elijah and sometimes as well the new practice of placing a cup of water for Miriam, the elder sister of Moses and Aaron, symbolizing the clear spring water which followed her and nurtured the Israelites throughout their journey in the Sinai desert. Three matzo wafers are placed on top of each other, into a special vessel for the purpose or simply placed between clean napkins or in a similar stratification, then placed under

the *keara* or next to it, underlining the injunction to eat matzo in the Torah. As the Seder ends, the door is opened, both to welcome Elijah and to show trust in God on this "night of watching."

The main Seder rituals established by the Pumbedita and Sura rabbinical academies and accepted by most Jewish communities in the Diaspora include the following: kadeish (consecration), rohtzah (ritual washing of hands), karpas (eating herbs soaked in salt water), yakhatz (ritual breaking of matzo with one portion set

aside for the afikoman, which is eaten last), maggid (telling the Passover story), motzi (blessing before eating bread), matzo (blessing before eating matzo bread), marror (blessing and consumption of bitter herbs), korekh (eating the so-called sandwich of matzo and bitter herbs), shulkhan orekh (eating the Seder meal beginning with the egg), tzafun (seeking, finding and eating the afikoman), bareikh (blessing after meal), Hallel (singing of psalms) and nirtzah (final prayer).

Dr. Aušra Pažeraitė

Jewish Book Corner

Judaica Research Center

Vilnius is inseparable from Jewish culture and even today the names of the Vilna Gaon, Mattiyahu Strashun, Abraham Sutzkever and many other famous Jewish intellectuals are spoken. Among the surviving Jewish cultural treasures, books are some of the more important ones. The Lithuanian Martynas Mažvydas National Library conserves thousands of books in Hebrew and Yiddish which belonged to Strashun, YIVO, the Mefitse Haskala library and different Jewish school and synagogue collections. The Judaica collection also contains newspapers, periodicals and one-time event publications, different brochures, manifestos and programs. The Martynas Mažvydas National Library set up a new Judaica Research Center for research on and publication of this valuable collection, organizing and implementing educational and information campaigns, preparing and holding exhibitions and publicizing the Judaica collection in 2017. We are seeking cooperation with domestic and foreign academic institutions, Litvak organizations and cultural centers to deal with issues of conserving, studying and publishing the cultural Judaica heritage surviving in our country. Our constant partner is the YIVO institute in New York which has

been cooperating with the Lithuanian national library for many years now and is implementing our joint-project Vilna Collections (<https://www.yivo.org/Vilna-Collections-project>), and which was the fundamental inspiration for setting up the new Judaica Research Center here. Although the Judaica Research Center officially opens on April 16 and 17, our center has already received guests, including Litvak World representative Anna Avidan who donated an album published in Lithuanian and English called "Litvak Art in Private Collections" and who recently published a map called "One Hundred Synagogues of Vilnius." We discussed opportunities for future cooperation. Edward "Ted" Janis, a US advisor on political and economic issues, also visited. Prospects for interesting joint projects were also discussed with Maksim Dorensky, director of the Malat Memory Foundation which organized the march last summer to commemorate Holocaust victims in Molėtai, Lithuania.

We are hoping for even more cooperation and discoveries in the future!

*Kristina Dūdaitė
Lithuanian Martynas Mažvydas
National Library*



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On the cover - moments from the Kaziukas Fair.

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| ו | ו | ה | ד | ג | ב | ב | א | א | א |
| melum vow | vow | hey | dalek | giml | veyz | beyz | komets alef | pasekh alef | (shtumer) alef |
| u | u (w) | h | d | g | v | b | o | a | silent |
| [u] | [u] | [h] | [d] | [g] | [v] | [b] | [o] | [a] | |
| פ | פ | פ | פ | פ | פ | פ | פ | פ | פ |
| kof | pasekh tsvey yudn | tsvey yudn | khirek yud | yud | tes | khes | zayin | vov-yud | tsvey vovn |
| k | ay | ey | i | y, i | t | kh | z | oy | v |
| [k] | [aj] | [ej] | [i] | [i] | [t] | [x] | [z] | [oj] | [v] |
| ק | צ | פ | ע | ס | נ | מ | ל | כ | ך |
| uf | tsadek, lange tsadek | fey | pey | ayin | samekh | nun lange nun | mem shole mem | lamed | khof lange khof |
| k (q) | ts | f | p | e | s | n | m | l | kh |
| [k] | [ts] | [f] | [p] | [e] | [s] | [n] | [m] | [l] | [x] |
| ט | דזש | זש | דזש | דזש | ס | ת | ת | ש | ר |
| tes | dalek zayin shin | zayin shin | dalek zayin | sof | tof | sin | shin | reish | |
| shin | ts | zh | dz | s | t | s | sh | r | |
| [ts] | [dz] | [z] | [dz] | [s] | [t] | [s] | [sh] | [r] | |

USEFUL INFORMATION

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

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

**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

SUPPORT

THE LITHUANIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

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