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Dear reader,

Special attention is paid in this issue to heritage and shtetlakh. What's the current state of Jewish heritage in Skuodas? What treasures from the Telšiai yeshiva does the Judaica Research Center of the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library conserve? Why were synagogues chosen as the theme of the new Lithuanian Jewish Community calendar? What is the new exhibit "One Century out of Seven: Lithuania, Lita, Lite" initiated by the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry about? All this and more in the new issue of the Bagel Shop. We hope you discover many new and interesting things here.

We invite your thoughts and suggestions for future issues. Please write radvile@lzb.lt

Radvilė and Zina

NEWS ROUND-UP

April 7 Exhibit "Jewish Foreign Citizens Murdered at the Ninth Fort" opens at the Ninth Fort Museum in Kaunas. Exhibit patron Henry Kellen (1915-2014) who immigrated to the USA in 1946 bequeathed an inheritance on the museum. Between 1941 and 1944 Lithuanian and foreign Jews were murdered at the Ninth Fort, including from Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany and the Soviet Union.

April 21 Oak grove called "Izraelita" planted near Rukainiai village in the Vilnius region by Lithuanian Environment Ministry, Israeli embassy to Lithuania and Vilnius regional administration to mark 25 years of Israeli-Lithuanian diplomatic relations.

April 21 Play "Nutildytos mūzos" [Silenced Muses] based on diary of young Jewish girl Matilda Olkinaitė performed by Rokiškio teatras association at Juozas Miltinis Gymnasium in Panevėžys to commemorate Holocaust victims.

May 12 Vilkaviškis Jewish community researcher Ralph Salinger and Lithuanian author of the book "Dingusios tautos pėdsakais" [Traces of a Lost Nation] Antanas Žilinskas speak at Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library.

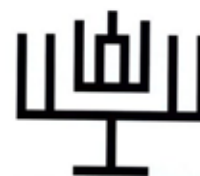
May 19 Restored wooden synagogue in Pakruojis opened to public. The synagogue is to host a children's section of the Juozas Paukštelis Public Library of the Pakruojis regional administration as well as concerts, public events and exhibitions.

May 21 Lithuanian Makabi Athletics Club holds mini-Maccabiah Games to mark 100th year of founding of club with 74 athletes from Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys, Šiauliai and Ukmergė competing in five sports: indoor soccer, basketball, volleyball, ping-pong and tennis.

May 22 Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library opens Judaica Research Center for research on Jewish documentary heritage, educational projects and publication of research.

May 30 Righteous among the Nations award ceremony held by the Israeli embassy at the Povilas Matulionis Pre-Gymnasium in Kupiškis, Lithuania to honor Catholic priest Feliksas Ereminas (1890–1962) who rescued Rokha Rozenberg (1925–1987).

May Announcement of new Litvak logo designed by Viktorija Sideraitė Alon. The Lithuanian Jewish Community received permission from the Justice Ministry to incorporate



the Lithuanian symbol of state, the posts of Gediminas, into the design. The new logo was trademarked as the exclusive property of the Lithuanian Jewish Community.

May Restoration of Šeduva Jewish cemetery by Šeduva Jewish Memorial Fund receives honorable mention in European Commission Europa Nostra awards for cultural heritage protection for 2017. A total of 13 heritage conservation projects from 11 member-states received awards.

June New "memory stones" installed in pavement at Vilniaus street no. 72 in Kaunas by sole Holocaust survivor in her family Rūta Basaitė-Glikman to commemorate her parents, grandfather and younger brother.

June LJC became a member of the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage, better known by the French acronym AEPJ, whose two main activities are the European Day of Jewish Culture and the European Route of Jewish Heritage.

June The Israeli embassy to Lithuania put on Israeli Fashion Week during which clothing designers Maoz Dahan of Nouveau Riche Dog, Evaal Kerneresh of Clothé, Dor Chen of Holyland Civilians, the Hilli Ari duet and jewelry designer Moran Porat visited Vilnius.

June 1 Rūta Guzevičiūtė book "Žydu kostiumo klajonės laike ir erdvėje" [Wanderings of Jewish Costume in Time and Space] presented at the LJC.

June 10 Rositsan and Maccabi Elite Chess and Checkers Club held chess tournament to honor Rivka Chvoles-Lichtenfeld, the Lithuanian-Israeli painter and chess player who was twice the Lithuanian women's champion in 1954 and 1955, the Israeli women's chess champion and a member of the Lithuanian national women's chess team.

July Lithuanian Makabi Athletics Club athletes won medals at 20th annual Maccabiah Games in Israel: Neta Alon won two golds in table tennis in one-on-one and mixed doubles play with Israeli Janiv Karmazin; Mark Šames took silver in badminton; Neta Alon and Vanesa Ražanskytė won another bronze in ping-pong; Eduardas Rozentalis took bronze in chess and Daniel Tarachovskij won bronze in mixed doubles-play with Ukrainian Nataliya Ruzgaizer.

July 10-21 International team of archaeologists from Israel, USA, Canada and Lithuania conducted a summer dig at Great Synagogue site in Vilnius and confirmed the existence of two mikvehs in an area first uncovered in 2016 by the same team.

July 25 Spa Vilnius Center in Druskininkai, Lithuania, hosted exhibition "From Druskininkai to Jerusalem: Moments in the Life and Work of Jacques Lipchitz." At the opening ceremony Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum museum specialist Aušra Rožankevičiūtė said a new Jacques Lipchitz museum would open in two years in Druskininkai.

July 31-August 4 A *plein air* outdoor

painting and art workshop was held in Šaukšteliškiai village in the Molėtai region with lessons by Raimondas Savickas from Lithuania and Alexander Ganelin and Anna Khodorkovski from Israel.

August 10-October 5 Klezmer music festival held for sixth time in Vilnius, Klaipėda, Kaišiadorys, Joniškis, Merkinė and other towns in a nine-concert series called "Music for Failed Plays" based on stories from Abraomas Karpinovičius's book "Last Prophet of Vilnius."

August 27 Third annual Israeli embassy bicycle fun-run held on last weekend of summer in the run-up to Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashana.

September The Cultural Heritage Department under the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture provides legal protection to the remains of the Great Synagogue located at Vokiečių street no. 13A (formerly ulica Żydowska no. 6) in Vilnius.

September 4 Palanga Resort Museum held academic conference "Jews of Palanga: A Lost Part of the City Community." Conference was organized by the museum and the Baltic Regional History and Archaeology Institute of Klaipėda University.

September 8 Opening of exhibition of works by Raimondas Savickas's painting class and outdoor painting workshop students at LJC.

September 13 Speaker of Israeli Knesset Yuli-Yoel Edelstein made official visit to Lithuania, meeting with LJC members as well attending a ceremony to honor Righteous Gentiles Ignacy Bujel (1889–1978) and Katarzyna Bujel (1893–1972) at the Vilnius Sholem Aleichem ORT Gymnasium. Edelstein visited the Ponar Memorial Complex. "We cannot always talk about friendship, we must take practical steps. In all meetings we have discussed how to strengthen economic and cultural ties and tourism, which is experiencing an increase currently," the speaker of the Israeli parliament said, adding he hoped Lithuanian



leaders would maintain current policies and insure xenophobia and anti-Semitism are rooted out in Lithuania. Edelstein visited Vilnius earlier in 2009 as the minister of public diplomacy and Diaspora affairs.

September 14 Presentation of book "Aleksandras Livontas ir Olga Šteinberg" [Aleksandras Livontas and Olga Šteinberg] by cultural scholar professor Rita Aleknaitė-Bieliauskienė at LJC.

September 20 The European Information Bureau located in the Lithuanian parliament opened an exhibit called "Colors in the Life of Rivka Chvoles" to commemorate the victims of the 1943 liquidation of the Vilnius ghetto. Lithuanian MP and chairman of the parliament's Culture Committee Dr. Arūnas Gelūnas presented the exhibit.

September 25 International conference "Diaspora and Heritage: The Shtetl" held at Lithuanian parliament to mark the Day of Remembrance of Lithuanian Jewish Victims of Genocide and the European Day of Jewish Culture. Conference speakers discussed Litvak history, commemoration and heritage and an exhibition funded by the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry called "One Century out of Seven: Lithuania, Lite, Lita" was opened in the parliament and which will later be sent to Lithuanian embassies abroad. The Jewish calendar for 5778 published by the Lithuanian Jewish Community featuring Lithuanian synagogues was also launched at the conference.



An international conference called "Diaspora and Heritage: The Shtetl" was held at the Lithuanian parliament to commemorate the Day of Remembrance of Lithuanian Jewish Victims of Genocide and the European Day of Jewish Culture. I gave a presentation there about the Lithuanian Jewish Community and Jewish heritage today. The conference we organized together with the Cultural Heritage Department under the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture was intended for the general public, not just specialists, researchers, members of parliament and social organization and NGO staff. I invite you to read the main theses in my presentation below.

According to the census of 2011, there are 3,050 Jews living in Lithuania. Other sources say the number is up to 5,000 Jews, of whom 2,000 live in the city of Vilnius. For comparison, in the mid-19th century there were 250,000 Jews living in what is now the territory of Lithuania. Lithuania lost more than 90% of her Jewish community in the Holocaust.

Today Lithuanian Jews are united in 28 non-governmental organizations which are in turn united in the association the Lithuanian Jewish Community. Heritage, although it is very important, is only one of the Lithuanian Jewish Community's areas of endeavor. The LJC is actively working in providing constant social support to Community members in seven regions of Lithuania, organizes educational programs, keeps alive the memory of Holocaust victims, is carrying out various project activities and is engaged in human rights advocacy.

Returning to the topic of heritage, Litvak heritage means relics of the cultural landscape created over more than 600 years by the community which once

reached a quarter million people, spread throughout almost all the cities and towns in Lithuania today. This includes almost 200 cemeteries, more than 200 mass murder/mass grave sites and more than 40 synagogues which have been declared cultural treasures. The current, post-Holocaust Lithuanian Jewish Community would never be able to guard and conserve that which has been created over centuries throughout the country without the help of governmental and municipal institutions, NGOs and active citizens.

The majority of the community is concentrated in Vilnius, with much fewer living in Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Panevėžys. In the remaining locations around the country there are practically no Jews left. There is no one to tend to family graves, to protect cemeteries. Most likely many here today understand there is no such thing as a "former cemetery" in Jewish tradition: even desecrated, even without headstones, they will always remain cemeteries and the rest of those buried there must be insured

and their memory honored. Thank you to the municipalities and regional administrations who realize the importance of taking care of Jewish cemeteries and mass murder sites. Unfortunately this attitude is not yet universal, not all cemeteries and mass murder sites have been configured and registered as integral plots of land, not all cemeteries have been fenced, not all headstones stolen in the Soviet era have been returned to cemeteries, it is still not possible to find way to all mass murder sites, and still only few of the names of those murdered have been commemorated. We are waiting for this to become the norm, clearly expressed in state policy and actually implemented in practice. We see many good signs and therefore believe that this will really happen sometime. But for now, we are watching how institutions are performing the functions assigned them by law, we are begging and pleading, and demanding, and offering advice and helping. Thank you to all those active citizens who report problems, thank you to the enthusiasts and NGOs from Lithuania and abroad who organize volunteer campaigns and even perform very expensive work to renovate cemeteries. Thank you to the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe for the advice and supervision of their rabbis.

Fourteen synagogues have been returned to the Lithuanian Jewish Community. Several dozen more synagogues listed on the registry of cultural treasures currently belong to the municipalities and private owners. Taking into account the pathetic state of the majority of synagogues and the fact that the majority are in locations where no Jews are left, the maintenance and restoration of these historic buildings is yet another difficult task for the LJC. So I say thank you to national and local government institutions, first of all to Diana Varnaitė, the director of the Cultural Heritage Department under the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture, and to the staff of the Chancellery of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, who understand and help others to understand that synagogues of Lithuania are the heritage of

all of Lithuania, not just ours, not just of the Jews. They help others understand there is no way to move these buildings, not to Vilnius nor to Jerusalem (although perhaps it would be possible to move them to the open-air Rumšiškės Lithuanian folk-life museum), and that synagogues without Jews will not serve their primary religious function, and so a different function must be found for them, one corresponding to the needs of the local community. It is solely due to this kind of understanding and joint effort that today we can take pride in the restored synagogues in Pakruojis, Joniškis and Kėdainiai, as well as the synagogues being restored in Vilnius, Žiežmariai and Alytus. We very much hope more Lithuanian synagogues, those in Alanta, Kurkliai, Tirkšliai and Kaltinėnai, along the same lines. And we haven't abandoned hope the Kalvarija municipality will begin to truly look for and find ways to implement their pledge to themselves to restore their unique synagogue complex, a project which began more than 15 years ago now. I don't know whether the inactivity is due to a lack of inter-institutional cooperation or insufficient good will, but for more than 20 years the LJC hasn't been returned the Kaunas Hassidic Synagogue, although the building stands unused for a long time now and is no longer needed by the current owner. Unlike other synagogues, the Kaunas Hassidic Synagogue can be used for performing its main function, to satisfy the religious needs of the Kaunas Jewish Community. Another similar example is the plan by the Kėdainiai regional administration, which has taken over management under a use agreement with the LJC of a synagogue, to use the restored synagogue building for hosting informal children's education activities. They are unable to receive EU funds because they are hindered by certain formalities which the Education Ministry could help solve, but so far they have shown no initiative to do so.

Concluding my talk on synagogues, I would like to say a few more words about the Great Synagogue in Vilnius, one of the most lucid cultural and sacral symbols of the Jews of Lithuania which

has received much public attention recently. The commemoration of the Great Synagogue site, as with any other issue concerning Litvak heritage, cannot be considered without the inclusion and participation of the LJC. The Lithuanian Jewish Community has the right and the duty to exert all efforts to insure the appropriate commemoration of surviving artifacts, still being discovered and examined by archaeologists, of the temple, and that the seriousness of the site be maintained and due respect paid to it. This is at its base a project to preserve heritage and memory, and the Great Synagogue cannot become a commercial site. The rebuilding of the synagogue would also be an unfounded measure for preserving its heritage if it didn't serve the community's needs. And in the end there are an abundance of investments requiring no special measures which could be made immediately: let's clean up the surrounding area, let's erect a real information board, and let's perhaps put some of the archaeological finds on public display.

Once we do clean up the site and commemorate the Great Synagogue, we will have another site attracting visitors (both domestic and foreign) helping educate the public on Litvak history and presenting our rich legacy. Along with many other successful initiatives whose number and diversity have mushroomed recently I will mention just a few: the YIVO archive digitization and public access project, the new Judaica Research Center at the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library, the marking by almost half of all Lithuanian municipalities and regional administrations of the European Day of Jewish Culture, the Jewish calendar published by the Lithuanian Jewish Community, the unique culinary heritage Bagel Shop café operating under the Lithuanian Jewish Community's roof, the revival of klezmer traditions, new exhibitions, educational programs and a plethora of events.

But in this area we also see a number of discouraging things. We have repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the ineffectively operating Vilnius Jewish

Culture and Information Center and the inappropriate use of premises entrusted to them, whose second floor isn't being used according to its function. We propose establishing a Vilnius Jewish History Museum there, whose concept was presented to the Vilnius municipality, although there has been no movement in considering the proposal.

Also, the LJC this year joined the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage which is coordinating the European Route of Jewish Culture and the European Day of Jewish Culture initiatives, and we place great hopes in the development and perfection of the association's activities.

Although we cannot resurrect the pre-war Lithuanian Jewish community, although we cannot return the human remains disturbed during construction of the Palace of Sports to their places of eternal rest, we do have access to civilized dialogue which can help us solve the challenges history poses us, to discover the best ways to present future generations if not perfectly restored Jewish heritage sites, at least a clearer understanding of their significance.

Jewish history in Lithuania didn't begin or end with the Holocaust. The LJC as the successor to this history expects to be included in all Jewish heritage preservation initiatives. I would like to underline that although Jewish heritage preservation is a priority for the LJC, it is actually most important to Lithuania herself. The Lithuanian towns and cities which have struck the balance with Jewish heritage preservation are able to provide their residents and visitors the opportunity to get to know personally part of the vanished past. The good examples show investments made in heritage pay for themselves: they are beneficial to the social, cultural and economic life of cities and towns facing shrinking population, they help residents understand their own local history and their connection with the past, the continuity of obscured traditions and prospects for the future.

Faina Kukliansky, LJC chairwoman

LJC Participates in Global Challa-Baking Shabbos Project

For four years now Jewish communities around the world have been taking part in the Shabbos project, when community members get together to bake Sabbath challa bread. In 2016 there were 1,006 cities which took part, including participation by the LJC's members in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys and elsewhere in Lithuania.

Dr. Aušra Pažėraitė of the Religious Studies and Research Center of Vilnius University says the word "challa" (usually pronounced HALL-a) refers to a loaf or bun made from dough "set aside." If you want to know more about how to prepare challa dough and how it's baked, please read Dr. Pažėraitė's article below.

When the Temple still existed, the first fruits were taken from wine, grain and oil and brought to the Temple. Today, when the Temple no longer exists, the first fruits are burnt. Three main injunctions which apply to women are explained in the midrash (Breishit Rabba XVII, 8): "Why is she given the commandment of niddos?" "Because she ruined Adam, who was the challa of the end of the world, so she is given the commandment of challa." "And why is she given the commandment of the Sabbath candles?" "Because she extinguished Adam's soul, that's why she is given the commandment of the Sabbath candles." Women have exclusive rights to perform certain ritual actions: This is a privilege rather than a punishment or debasement. The separation (segregation) of first fruits described in the Tanakh signifies sanctification for the Creator through Whom all that is grown or done by the hand of man receives a blessing. Israel itself is called the first-born (Shmot 4, 22).

By kneading dough the individual participates directly in the process of creation. Challa is apportioned from dough made from 5 species of grain: wheat, barley, oats, rye and spelt. Of course authorities in Jewish law (halakha) have considered all sorts of nuances, which challa is fitting, which is not, of what firmness or wetness it should be, where the grain comes from

and so on. Shulkhan Arukh (Hebrew "The Set Table," a concise collection of Judaic law) says: "Dough of a thick mixture which has been kneaded in anticipation of boiling, baking, making suganin (doughnuts) or letting it dry in the sun, and this is done with it, is exempt [from challa]. But if it is kneaded intending to make bread, and instead the decision is made to boil, bake or make suganim or to let it dry in the sun, it [challa] is requirement, because it has become obligated from the beginning of the kneading process" (Y. D. 329:3).

The blessing is said before forming the dough into loaves. What amount of flour is necessary so that the blessing is said for the challa set aside? There are several opinions. The book Khazon Ish says not less than 2.25 kilograms must be kneaded. In Rabbi Chaim Nae's opinion it is not less than 1.6666 kilograms, while Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu says not less than 2.486 kilograms. When the blessing is said on the bread during Sabbath, it must be said over two full loaves, and at least one of them must be eaten (Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 117b). This injunction is called lehemishne and is binding on both men and women, all who themselves have not said the blessing. In total three or four challa loaves are required for one day of Sabbath (for the three required meals). Challa is sometimes made of six braided pieces of dough, and so both challa loaves



together have 12 braids, symbolizing the "Bread of the Presence" (lehem ha-panim) offered at the Temple.

Challa must be covered top and bottom. From the bottom if it is not placed on a specific type of Sabbath table cloth. Rashi says the manna given in the desert was covered by two layers of dew: it fell on dew, and later it was covered by dew. It is also said the challa should be covered when the blessing is said on the wine, because the Talmudic sages determined the blessing on the bread should be said first (Seder Birkat ha-Nehenin 10:13). In order to solve the conflict so that the challa isn't "ruined" because the wine is blessed first in celebrating Sabbath, it is covered. Traditionally special covers were used to cov-

er the challa, often decorative, sometimes with fringe. Challa may be covered simply by a separate small table cloth as well.

Braided challa is baked year-round Friday evenings, but in the period before the Jewish New Year the challa dough is sweetened and often raisins, figs and orange peels are added. The round shape of the challa loaf symbolizes the circular cycle of the year and the raisins symbolize a sweet and easy life. Jewish communities in the Middle East and Eastern Europe say the round shape of the challa loaf symbolizes a royal crown. The Jews of Algeria form the challa dough into the shape of a bird which carries dreams to Heaven, right into the ear of the Most High.

Interview

REMEMBERING THE JEWS OF SKUODAS



Historians say Skuodas (Shkud), located at crossroads important for trade, developed and prospered because of the Jewish community there, one of the oldest in Lithuania. Unfortunately today there is no one left to remember the members of that community. This year as in previous years, for the fourteenth time now, the European Day of Jewish Culture was celebrated with various events. This year the theme was "Diaspora and Heritage: The Shtetl." On this occasion we spoke with regional historian and Skuodas's Bartuva Pre-Gymnasium principal Virginijus Jokšas about the Shkud shtetl.

What sort of community was the Skuodas Jewish community? There's a page dedicated to the Skuodas shtetl on the internet (<http://shtetlshkud.com>) which talks about the destroyed community. Pranas Šarpnickis shares his thoughts about the Jews of Skuodas on the webpage. In general, though, it doesn't seem as if the Jews of the town or the surrounding area have received much attention from researchers. Why is that?

In the interwar period the Jewish community was rather large and united. Local residents of other ethnicities were unable to conceive of life without them in the period of the first Republic of Lithuania. Jews were responsible for all trade and production in the town... Today the Jewish community of Skuodas is no more. The history of the Jews of Skuodas really hasn't received special attention from scholars to this day. It's very difficult to decide why it has happened this way... Perhaps this sort of activity isn't very profitable and at this time isn't very attractive to young academics.

What is the state of Jewish heritage in the town and region of Skuodas? Which locations illustrating the life of the Jews of Skuodas would you single out as worth visiting?

The Jewish legacy in Skuodas and Skuodas region is not abundant, none of the three Jewish synagogues of Skuodas survive, they were burnt down during World War II. The old town center of Skuodas was abandoned, changed and rebuilt, where all mercantile life took place, and the Jewish cemetery was destroyed. One can visit the site of the cemetery in the town, there's an exhibition about Jewish life at the Skuodas museum and there are monuments at the mass murder sites to remind future generations of the tragic period in Jewish history.

You have completed a work called "Jews in Skuodas." What made you take up this topic?

I wouldn't call it a work. I have collected regional history materials about the ethnic minorities who lived in Skuodas. The first was a study of the Latvians of Skuodas, and later also about the life and activities of the Jews of Skuodas in the period between the wars. I have been interested in regional history since my first job at the Sofija and Vladimiras Zubovas primary school in Ginkūnai in the Šiauliai region. When I moved to Skuodas and found out about the former large Skuodas Jewish community, then I thought I should learn more about this

topic. All the more so because according to the information I had then, no one had really looked into this topic.

There weren't any events for European Day of Jewish Culture in Skuodas? Why not? You might become the ambassador of events to that a European Day of Jewish Culture event might take place in Skuodas in 2018.

Again, it's difficult to say why Jewish cultural events haven't come to Skuodas. Maybe it's simply because organizers have nothing to go on... I think the staff of the Skuodas museum, those hard-working historians, would not turn down the chance to help organize events in Skuodas. And then there are the history teachers... Of course Skuodas is becoming depopulated because of emigration. That's why larger events usually pass the town by. I'm not sure I would be able to perform such a serious function, to be an ambassador as you call it, but I would never decline taking part in organized events...

You took part in the international summer seminar Teaching the Holocaust and visited Israel... How have you used the experience gained in the educational process? How should we be talking about this tragedy with students? How does regional history research fit into education?

Regional history is an area of activity where we are able to listen to the living word of the information, completely different from the texts of textbooks. Students are taught about the tragedy of the Jewish people by visiting, as circumstances allow, historical sites and learning first-hand about the historical heritage... Unfortunately school principals are unable to teach lessons currently, so I talk to students directly only in after-school activities. Regional history research activities are being conducted at the schools, but they need to be directed so they truly help students understand the history of the place where they live more fully.

Interview by Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik

Excerpt from "The Jews of Skuodas"

LET'S NOT FORGET

Passages from the History of the Jewish Community of the City of Skuodas

As in every Lithuanian city and town, so in Skuodas there was a large Jewish population. About 4,000 people lived in Skuodas between the two world wars, Jews accounting for about 30 percent of the total population. The Jewish community of the town was not closed. During the period of the Lithuanian Republic (1918-1940) Jews played an important role in the life of the town. Jews actively traded with Lithuanians, Latvians and Germans. They owned about 200 different companies and enterprises, including about 20 private cobblers, factories and shops, an artificial horn factory, a dairy and several spinning operations. About 170 people were employed by these enterprises. Veronika Gedgaudienė recalled

Itsik Kan's shoe factory Kontinent was the largest enterprise then and employed about 50 people. Very fine raw materials which the owner transported mainly from the Šiauliai leather works were used to make the shoes. His factory made shoes of all types and sizes. Even the pickiest customer was able to find something which suited him. Kan sold his products in many Lithuanian cities and towns besides Skuodas. Besides Kan's shoe operation, Pikilder and Berstein also made shoes in town, and so did Moshe Jankelovich and Moshe Leib Grinblat in Skuodas's Old Town. Long-time resident of the old Skuodas Rozalija Baltiejienė (born 1900) said the Jewish man Veršteinis also had a cobbler's shop. Michaelis Mines's shoe workshop Konkurencija operated as well on Laisvės street in the Skuodas Old Town. Aleksas Baltiejus reported Hirsh Gilder's shoe-making enterprise was also a large one.

There were other Jewish enterprises as well. Fogelman's workshop made buttons. The brothers Fogelman were also engaged the iron trade and had a large iron-works shop supplying residents of the town and surrounding area window-frames and doors. Dovid Mirkes was a pharmacist and directed the large center pharmacy known then as the Groys Apteik (Great Apothecary) while I. Zilberstein directed the central pharmacy (Tsentrālė Apteik). Spitz owned a leather-working enterprise and leather goods shop. There was a small candy factory



Skuodas city synagoge



Itsik Kan, center, at the shoe factory

operating in Skuodas as well. The wool-spinning operation on Laisvės street in the Skuodas Old Town was owned by Markus Khoikher who had two spinning machines and two "kna-tines," looms with electric motors. Other Jews were engaged in different private activities: Yosel Faivush was a grain, linen and forest resources merchant; Solomon Kohen was engaged in sales, Valerijonas Kubilovičius owned a restaurant; Yankel Segal was a merchant; Efroim Segal had a horse-racing station; Leib Zelikman purchased grain; Abraham Moshe Urdangas did retail; Yudelman was an expediter; Okhman had a fur workshop.

Most of the stores and shops in Skuodas then belonged to Jews. They were located in the center of town and offered all sorts of small items, and a meat store belonged to Zargėvičius. Davidovas was one of the owners of a chain of larger stores which sold good stationery products. Meyer owned a large variety store in the Old Town. Abraham Faktor owned a store in the town center. The owners themselves worked in their shops with help from family members and hired hands. Elman had the largest warehouse of goods in Skuodas. Owners of smaller shops without means to import goods from elsewhere would take their products from his warehouse. During Lithuanian independence goods flowed to Skuodas from Plungė, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Kaunas. D. Davidas's book shop operated in Skuodas. Every resident of Skuodas and the surrounding area knew the name of the renowned Dr. Fugelman, Dr. Lev and Dr. Karshtat.

There were several Jewish athletics organizations and a Jewish soccer team in Skuodas in the interwar period. A Macabi athletics club branch opened in 1924. Various Jewish cultural associations operated. Around 1919 a four-grade Yiddish primary school was established. It had five teachers but funds weren't granted for a building a new school because the Lithuanian state didn't finance the construction of private schools. Dr. Karshtat was the school principal, followed by M. Fogelman. The school failed and was closed because of debt. A new Jewish primary school opened in 1922 with Hebrew as the language of instruction. A Jewish high school

began to operate later in Skuodas maintained by the Jewish community, with 70 students there in 1923. Jewish children who completed the school went on to further education at the Lithuanian pre-gymnasium in Skuodas.

Jews had their own houses of prayer as well. Elder Skuodas residents Juozas Gadeikis and Pulkerija Gadeikienė reported there two (some other sources claim three) Jewish synagogues in Skuodas. Others called these "shuls." One synagogue was on what is now Jono Basanavičiaus street, with the second on what is now Simono Daukanto street in the Old Town, while the location of the third isn't known exactly. It's thought it was also in the Old Town on Laisvės street. All of them were wooden and burned down during World War II. The Gadeikises said only men went to the "shul."

The Jewish cemetery is on the current Salomėjos Nėries street (then completely on the edge of town) in the Old Town next to the Bartuvos river. On the street side the cemetery was bounded by a long, tall and opaque fence. There was no fence on the side of the river. After the war the Jewish cemetery wasn't maintained and was abandoned. Around 1971 or 1972 it was decided to abolish the cemetery, to completely destroy it. Residents queried said the Skuodas Amelioration Work Agency carried out the destructive work. Jewish headstones were toppled by bulldozers in the direction of the Bartuvos river bank. They say the headstones are probably now still there because most were covered by earth. Some of the desecrated Jewish headstones were used in the construction of stone fences next to new brick houses. The Soviet government in the 1970s and 1980s held different celebrations, May Days, at the site where the graves were destroyed and people danced, sang, had fun and lit bonfires... In the period of Lithuanian rebirth some headstones were exhumed and surviving fragments were used in a Jewish cemetery commemorative monument which reminds the public there was a Jewish cemetery. In 1994 a commemorative stone was erected next to the former Jewish cemetery and a decorative fence was built on the side of the cemetery facing the street. But this is not a solution. It is much too petty a reminder of the destroyed historical, religious and cultural monument of the Jewish community of Skuodas.

*Virginijus Jokšas, principal, history teacher
Bartuva Pre-Gymnasium, Skuodas*



H. Gilder shoe factory workers outside building

The Bund at 120

(1897–2017)

*The red-hot shirts of the steely bundists
A blue student hastens to grey Bergelson
And the Yiddish language is a crown of oak leaves
On sacredly mundane gates to the city.*

From the poem Vilne by Moyshe Kulbak

In the 18th century and for several centuries Vilnius influenced the lives of Jews living in the most remote locations and this strange influence of the Jerusalem of Lithuania in different spheres is clearly visible today as well. Vilnius is a global center of a world religion (Rabbinical Judaism) and secular education.

In the second half of the 19th century Vilnius reached a cultural zenith in Jewish culture in the Hebrew and Yiddish languages and became a second Jerusalem. At the end of the 19th century Vilnius became a center for the Jewish labor and nationalist movement. Yuli Martov (Yuli Tserdobaum), the future leader of the Russian social democrats (Mensheviks), lived in exile here from 1892 to 1895. His speech "Breakthrough in the History of the Jewish Labor Movement" at a Jewish workers' meeting in 1895, Arkadi Kremer's brochure "Ob Agitatsii" ["On Agitation"] and speeches and articles by Samuel Gozhanksy, Abraham Mutnik and others provided a new direction for Jewish proletariat of Vilnius. They laid the



Building in Vilnius where Bund was founded.

groundwork for the Bund, the Jewish autonomous proletarian social democratic organization.

The Jerusalem of Lithuania (*Yerushalaim de Lita*), Vilnius, is the cradle of the Bund, the Universal Union of the Jewish Workers of Lithuania, Poland and Russia (*Algemeiner idisher arbeiterbund in Lite, Poiln un Rusland*). The late professor of philosophy Leonidas Donskis often said in his lectures utopia can be born in towns, where many people hold the same ideas, but not in villages and even smaller settlements. The utopia of the Bund was born in Vilnius.

The Bund was the Jewish social democratic party which operated in Eastern Europe from the 1890s to the 1950s. The Bund was a leftist socialist party in favor of progressive democracy and the socialization of means of production, promoting the traditions of a democratic Marxism. The Bund fought for the national and cultural autonomy of European Jews and the establishment of a secular system of education, and promoted the spread of Yiddish linguistic culture. Bund members believed this would prevent Jews from assimilating and allow them to maintain a distinct cultural identity. The Bund was an anti-religious and anti-Zionist party and stood against Jewish immigration to Palestine. They adhered to four principles: socialism, secularism, Yiddishkayt and doykayt. The word "doykayt" entails a loyalty to the place where one resides in the here and now, and is illustrated in the bundist slogan "The place where we live is our country."

The Bund was founded at an illegal meeting in Vilnius where 13 delegates (8 of them laborers) elected a Central Committee constituted of three representatives: Arkadi Kremer, Abraham Mutnik and Mendel Levinson (Vladimir Kossovskii). In October of 1897 the Bund merged with the Russian social democratic labor party, at whose constituent



Bundists in exile in Yakutia, 1904



Bund election poster, Vilnius

assembly in Minsk in 1898 three of the nine delegates were bundists. The Bund entered the Russian party as an autonomous section and Kremer was elected a member of the latter's Central Committee.

Besides its founding conference, there were the following Bund conferences: the second congress in Kaunas in October of 1898; the third in Kaunas in October of 1899; the fourth in Białystok in May of 1901; the fifth in Zurich in June of 1903; the sixth in Zurich in October and November of 1905; the seventh in Lvov (Lemberg)

in August and September of 1906 and the eighth congress in St. Petersburg (Petrograd) in December of 1917.

Bund representatives often argued with the leadership of the Russian party over Jewish cultural and national autonomy. The Bund demanded the Russian social democratic party recognize it as the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat based on the principle of nationality, or ethnicity, rather than on the principle of territory because Jews, unlike other peoples of the Russian Empire, weren't concentrated in one location where they would form an ethnic majority. The Russian party was organized geographically and included all party members living in a specific region without regard to ethnicity. The Bund stressed the necessity of forming separate local organizations for Jewish party members. These disagreements became so deep the Bund left the Russian party in 1903 (only to return in 1906) and Lenin and other leaders of the Russian social democrats embarked upon an ideological battle against the Bund's position.



Bund athletics camp near Vilnius, 1928



Tsukunft unit in ruins of Warsaw ghetto

In March of 1921 the Bund was liquidated in Russia and some members were accepted into the Russian Communist Party. During the Bolshevik terror in the USSR from the 1920s to the 1940s many Bund members and leaders were repressed and murdered. In Eastern Europe, in Poland, Romania, Lithuania and Latvia, the Bund's successors continued to operate until World War II. Polish Bund leaders Victor Alter and Henryk Ehrlich fled to the USSR in 1939 and were arrested by the NKVD and murdered. Bund activities continued in Poland until 1948 when the organization was liquidated by the pro-Stalin Communist government. The First International Conference of the Bund took place in Brussels in 1947. After the revival of the Socialist International in 1951 the Bund (as the International Jewish Labor Bund) was accepted as a party-member of the



Noah Portnoy, Bund Central Committee chairman (standing), together with other Bund leaders at the thirtieth anniversary in Warsaw. Sitting from right: Joseph Chmurner, Meir Wasser, Sarah Schweber, Henryk Ehrlich, Victor Alter (at end) and Beinisch Michalewicz. *Photo from YIVO.*



Algemeiner idisher arbeitsbund poster from Daugavpils (Dvinsk), Latvia, 1931. Poster announces Bund meeting.

International. A Bund section was established in Israel in 1951 along with the party organ "Lebns Fragn", which was published until 2014. In 1955 the Bund renounced some of its anti-Zionist positions and recognized the establishment of the state of Israel as an important event in the life of the Jewish people.

The Bund died in the flames of the Holocaust along with six million European Jews, socialists, atheists and religious people, people on the left and right, nationalists and the assimilated. The Zionist Mordechai Anielewicz and the bundist Abraham Blum died together in a command bunker during the Warsaw Uprising. The bundist Marek Edelman, a deputy commander during the uprising, later said: "The country of the Jews was between the Vistula and the Dniepr. Neither in America, nor in France or England, was it possible to create a Jewish culture. Why not? What is a nation? A nation is people who together create culture and progress. It's not a necessity

they have a common ideology or religion. Five millions Jews from Odessa to Warsaw had a shared culture and even uniform economic conditions. None of them are left now."

Historian Abraham Noverstern of Jerusalem University argues "the reason for the Bund's failure was utopia itself. What will insure the continuity of the unique existence of the Jewish people in the socialist future when all are equals? The Bund was also established on the basis of catastrophe. For as long as there was anti-Semitism and social repression in Poland, the Bund was needed for the fight. If we assume Poland had developed along the lines of Western European countries, then over the course of time it would rid itself of the virus of anti-Semitism, a liberal society would be established there and all doors would be opened to Jews, as happens in all free countries." Noverstern, himself from a family of bundists, believes the truth is much more complex: "That the Bund was destroyed in the

Holocaust is only half true. Many bundists left for America and other places unaffected by the Holocaust. But even there the Bund was unable to maintain itself beyond the life of a single generation." Bund members first and foremost spoke the language of socialism, with Yiddish taking second place. International socialism was more important to them than Jewishness.

Moshe Beregovsky in Kiev in 1931 recorded a folk song sung by the painter T. Lakhman which illustrates very clearly the Bund's agenda:

*Oh you stupid little Zionists
With your utopian thinking.
You should go to the factories
And understand the reality of the workers.
You want to take us to Jerusalem
So we can die as a people.
We would do better to remain in diaspora
And fight for liberation.*

Written by Geršonas Taicas

Celebration of Sugihara Week for First Time in Lithuania

The first-ever Sugihara Week celebration was held in Kaunas from September 2 to 8. The week-long celebration consisted of events to commemorate Japanese consul Chiune Sugihara. Posted in Kaunas in 1939 and 1940, Sugihara and Dutch consul Jan Zwartendijk issued "visas for life," saving around 6,000 Jews from the Holocaust. Many of them were yeshiva students and Zionists fleeing Poland. Over six weeks the Japanese consul issued about 2,000 transit visas, working more than 18 hours per day. In his memoirs Sugihara said he couldn't refuse to help people who came to him with the shadow of death on their faces.

Dr. Aurelijus Zykas, head of the Asian Studies Center at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas and one of the organizers of Sugihara Week, said: "Lithuanian, Japanese and Jewish artists performed joint creative projects during Sugihara Week, and academics discussed events from the period at the actual locations in Kaunas."

A Japanese team contributed to the restoration of Sugihara House, where the consul resided and now a museum. Executives and volunteers from To-

kon International group repainted the building. "We are simple painters, but we feel Sugihara's spirit. Paint has the significance of rebirth, so painting this building together with the residents of Kaunas we are strengthening the connection and reviving again the belief Sugihara held in his heart that every person has the right to happiness," Tokon International board of directors chairman Keiichi Yasuda said.

Japanese people, even if they don't have a lot of time for site-seeing in Kaunas, almost always visit Sugihara House anyway. For them he is a kind of modern example of the Japanese samurai spirit. Sugihara House museum opened in 2000. The Sugihara Foundation/Diplomats for Life organization was founded in December of 1999 by a group of Lithuanian and Belgian intellectuals and businesspeople including professor Egidijus Aleksandravičius, businessman and politician Ramūnas Garbaravičius and businessman Freddie Opsomer. The founders of the foundation sought to combine intellectual efforts and funds for commemorating Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara in Lithuania.



Sugihara Week offered visitors a number of events, including Japanese kendo demonstrations, an arts and crafts fair, concerts, lectures, films and Japanese arts and crafts workshops. There was an academic discussion of the significance of Chiune Sugihara's heroic actions. The Vincas Kudirka Public Library in Kaunas opened an exhibition by the artist Kotryna Šešelgytė of illustrations of Japanese folktales. Creative workshops included a kite-flying event by students from the Jurgis Dobkevičius Pre-Gymnasium in Kaunas and students from schools in the town of Yaotsu in Gifu Prefecture in Japan of traditional Japanese and modern kite forms bearing inscriptions in Lithuanian and Japanese.

The organizers of Sugihara Week events in Kaunas included the city municipality, the Asian Studies Center of Vytautas Magnus University, the Sugihara Foundation/Diplomats for Life organization, the Kyumeikan Kendo School and the Japanese embassy to the Republic of Lithuania. Main partners included the Jaukūs namai salon, Hof Hotel and the Japanese studies center Global Japan Office.



People waiting for the visas. Photo from balticasia.lt

Jewish Genocide Day Marked in Vilnius



High-ranking Lithuanian officials, Lithuanian Jewish Community representatives, foreign ambassadors, representatives of state institutions and others marked the Day of Remembrance of the Lithuanian Jewish Victims of Genocide at the Ponar Memorial Complex on September 23.

"Together we all witness the tragedy of the Jewish people, which is also the tragedy of our entire nation. This is the darkest page of our history. We must speak openly and courageously about the fact that together with the Nazis, our local murderers participated in perpetrating this blood-curdling crime. We have lost part of our history, part of the identity of Lithuania. This is an historical lesson for all of us. We must do everything possible so that it never happens again," Lithuanian prime minister Saulius Skvernelis said at the Ponar memorial.

Lithuanian president Dalia Grybauskaitė awarded the Life-Saver's Cross to 43 people who rescued Jews during World War II on the Day of Remembrance of the Lithuanian Jewish Victims of Genocide this year. Most awards were made posthumously so the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren of Righteous Gentiles and other family members accepted them on behalf of their late relatives.

LJC chairwoman Faina Kukliansky said at the ceremony: "Assuming the role of perpetrator or passive observer seemed to many to be the natural choice. Because of this choice, or more precisely, this moral surrender, Lithuania lost entire shtetls or towns with all of their intellectual potential, the cultural and economic nucleus of Lithuania was destroyed, the destinies of whole families were cut short and the agony of the Holocaust and culpability in the mass murder of Jews became our inheritance, our legacy for centuries. Unlike others, those who rescued Jews didn't see the situation at that time as hopeless and without solution. ... The names of the rescuers must be known and spoken, and their memory celebrated. Our heroes have done their work, and now it is time for Lithuania to do hers. I hope that fourteen years now after the late Icchokas Meras appealed to Lithuania leaders, a monument will grace the capital, before which children will say the names of the rescuers, before which those who were rescued and their descendants may pray. A monument which will be only a small symbol of our eternal gratitude. The gratitude of the Jewish people for the life given them, and the gratitude of the Lithuanian people for their rescued honor."

Back in 2010 professor Saulius Sužiedėlis gave a lecture at the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum about genocide in the 20th century. His words and thoughts spoken that day remain topical today. He said all double-genocide theories should be forgotten, the theories which attempt to claim Jewish Communists repressed Lithuanians during the first Soviet occupation and that therefore the genocide was a response to that oppression. The professor pointed out about 140,000 Jews, 118,000 of them Lithuanian citizens, were murdered before December of 1941. About 3,000 to 5,000 ethnic Lithuanians accused of Communism were shot.

The professor also quoted a Nazi military order dated June 17, 1941, which said German soldiers should not hinder efforts by local residents to "cleanse themselves" of Communists and Jews. "In the newly occupied lands we cannot hinder efforts by the local population who are opposed to Communists and Jews to cleanse themselves. On the contrary, this needs to be initiated, discretely of course, and if necessary set in the right direction, but in such a way that local self-defense units won't be able to point to directives or stated political objects in the future. Initially the creation of permanent self-defense units under centralized command is to be avoided. Instead of this, it is more appropriate to encourage local pogroms by the populace, as directed earlier," the order says.

THE SYNAGOGUES OF LITHUANIA

in the Drawings of Gerardas Bagdonavičius

The new calendar for the Jewish year 5778 published by the Lithuanian Jewish Community adheres to the theme of the 2017 European Day of Jewish Culture, "Diaspora and Heritage: The Shtetl." Shtetlakh are towns in Central and Eastern Europe where Jews formed the majority of the population before the Holocaust. The religious, political, social, economic and cultural center of the shtetl was the synagogue, the place for Jewish religious meetings and Torah study.

Of the hundreds of synagogues once gracing the Lithuanian landscape, only several dozen remain. There were more than one hundred synagogues in Vilnius alone before the Holocaust. Currently 44 synagogues and synagogue complexes are listed on the registry of Lithuanian cultural treasures. The majority have disappeared forever, in many cases leaving us no picture of how they looked. The Bagdonavičius drawings of synagogues featured in the calendar are a rich source of information, drawings he made during different ethnographic expeditions in the period between the two world wars.

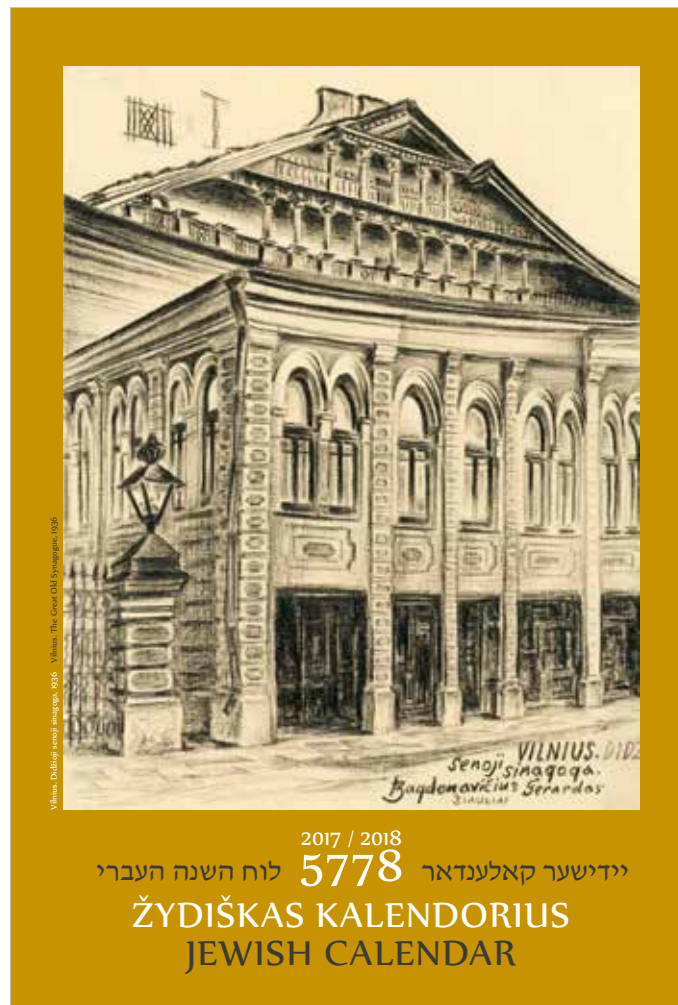
Bagdonavičius (1901-1986) was an artist working in drawing and painting, an illustrator, a theater designer and teacher. His legacy, a corpus of more than 4,000 works, is preserved at 11 Lithuanian museums, with the majority at the Aušra Museum in Šiauliai, the collection to which the illustrations in the new calendar belong.

Only two of the synagogues portrayed in the calendar are still standing: the synagogue of the Chaim Frankl leather factory in Šiauliai and the synagogue in Pakruojis. The latter belongs to the LJC with whom the Pakruojis regional administration has a use agreement. It was only reopened to the public in the spring of 2017 after extensive renovation over several years. It is

the first wooden synagogue restored after the Holocaust in Lithuania. Wooden synagogues are a unique Lithuanian cultural heritage treasure; fifteen of them remain in Lithuania, with only a few more still standing in Europe.

Over the last decade synagogues in Joniškis, Kėdainiai and Marijampolė, Lithuania, were restored, and in 2017 renovation work was and is being performed on three more synagogues which belong to the LJC: the Choral Synagogue in Vilnius (one of two working synagogues in Lithuania), the Zavl kloyz on Gėlių street in Vilnius and the wooden synagogue in Žiežmariai. Many more synagogues await the attention of restoration experts as the unmaintained buildings slowly sink into ruin. Will we manage to save what has,

through some miracle, survived to our day? Responsibility for this unique Jewish heritage, part of the Litvak cultural heritage, falls not just to the Lithuanian Jewish Community, but also to the state, municipal and regional administrative institutions and to all of us.



2017 / 2018
 לוח השנה העברי 5778 יידישער קאלענדאר
 ŽYDIŠKAS KALENDORIUS
 JEWISH CALENDAR

ONE CENTURY OUT OF SEVEN: Lithuania, Lita, Lite

A mobile exhibition called "One Century of Seven: Lithuania, Lita, Lite" initiated by the Lithuanian Foreign Minister went on display in the Lithuanian parliament from September 14 to 29. The exhibit takes an alternative look at the place and fate of Jews in the twists and turns of Lithuanian history and was unveiled during the conference "Diaspora and Heritage: The Shtetl" held in the Lithuanian parliament to mark the European Day of Jewish Culture and the Lithuanian Day of Remembrance of the Jewish Victims of Genocide.

"It's significant the exhibition telling the story of the life of the Jews of Lithuania in the 20th century has been unveiled here, in the parliament. Later it will travel to the USA and will be displayed at the general consulate in Chicago, where consul general Mantvydas Bekešius, the spiritual initiator of this exhibition, is resident. The history of the Jews of Lithuania, Lithuania's relationship with the past in speaking of the Holocaust and Lithuanian participation in the mass murders, is the subject of discussion and controversy, and not just inside Lithuania. Disagreements on this issue often push people away from Lithuania. For that reason the Lithuanian Foreign Minister initiated this exhibition on the Jews of Lithuania. It attempts to present important facts not well known to the broader public without distorting history. Our hope is that both Jews and Lithuanians living abroad will receive this exhibit favorably. The exhibition should be interesting as well to those who know nothing of Lithuania, and those with a negative or ambivalent point of view," Lithuanian Foreign Ministry ambassador for special assignments Dainius Junevičius said at the launch of the exhibit. "The desire was for a modern, broad and general exhibit speaking in the voice of modern Lithuania. We're pleased our views and those of the leadership of the Lithuanian Jewish Community coincided in this and we received support and consent. Fortune smiled upon as well that public figure Pranas Morkus, the initiator and first chairman of the Lithuania-Israel Association, and Judvī Studio designers Victoria Sideraitė Alon and Jūratė Juozėnienė agreed to create the exhibition," he said.

Pranas Morkus, the essayist, author of many cultural projects, social activist and man responsible for much in improving relations between Lithuanians and Poles, Russians and Jews, said when he received the proposal for coming up with the exhibition, he wasn't quite sure what it should be, but tried to look at Jewish-Lithuanian relations from a different perspective.

"Dozens of works by historians have been published in Lithuania, but I haven't come across a general look at what happened between Jews and Lithuanians and which happened throughout the 20th century. Everything that is happening in public life reminds me of the fact I discovered from the winter of 1945, when

Mykolas Kurpavičius visited the association of Lithuanian Jewish survivors in Munich and spoke with Kaunas engineer Leibovičius about possible coordinated actions by Jews and Lithuanians in freeing Lithuania. Leibovičius said: 'You know, something happened before your visit.' Kurpavičius understood he meant the mass murder of Jews in Lithuania, and said: 'Well, you see, there were these lowlifes, anti-social types who dressed up as Communist Youth...' He received the reply: 'No, Jews think the entire Lithuanian nation committed the crime.' A conference a year later somewhat softened that generalization: all social strata but not the entire nation took part in the murder. At that time the men in exile came up with the idea of distributing a questionnaire but the initiative went nowhere because the people in the displaced-persons camps scattered around the world. It's unfortunate that Lithuanian and Jewish friendship is today still stuck on two questions on that questionnaire: What do you know about Lithuanians who rescued Jews? and Which Jews do you know who harmed Lithuanian citizens and the Lithuanian state? All the work by historians is not included in the general consideration of the issues."

He said he had recently watched a discussion among five professors on the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the modern Republic of Lithuania. "It was recalled how the Lithuanian Council began the march towards independence with such difficulty, and they said it was especially difficult to solve issues regarding the ethnic minorities, Poles, Belarusians, Russians and *those same Jews. Those same Jews*. One must remember that in December of 1918 the Union of Lithuanian Zionists publicized their resolution to contribute to the founding of Lithuanian statehood. It's indisputable Jews contributed to the recognition of Lithuania *de jure*. In the areas of economy, culture, health care, the creation of an administrative system--in all these areas the contribution made by the Jews of Lithuania was enormous. Lithuania was a binary state: the villages were Lithuanian and the shtetlakh Jewish, and that's illustrated on the map in the exhibit. That's what I wanted to show. We have to give up fooling ourselves, give up on returning to our exaggerated past. We are afflicted by the attempt to say more about ourselves and our state. The main inspiration is to see things from a different angle. Not assigning blame or

innocence. After all it's completely clear who's guilty and what happened. What else was there besides that? What was the contribution made by a quarter millions Jews to the consolidation and prosperity of the Lithuanian state in the period between the two world wars?" Morkus said at the opening.

Victoria Sideraitė Alon called Morkus's text written for the exhibit poetic and said it could be called an ode to Jewish life in Lithuania which they called their homeland, Lite, for many centuries. That written component frequently quotes from Moyshe Kulbak's poem Vilne, one of the most beautiful poems in Yiddish about Vilnius. The poetic textual component inspired a poetic visual form for the entire exhibit, filled with metaphor, hints and semantics recalling principles employed in the illustration of poetry. All of the calligraphic designs in the exhibit come from the Hebrew letters in Kulbak's Vilne. The images are strengthened by the content and dynamism of this very fitting text.

Sideraitė Alon said: "From the text of the poem Vilne appeared not only a mighty oak, matured and setting down firm Hebrew orthographic roots in the Lithuanian soil, but also two peoples who in the cradle of this land met face-to-face, and for both of whom that encounter was fateful--on both sides, Kulbak's poem speaks its own language, Lithuanian and Yiddish, an unbreakable glass barrier forever between them--and from Kulbak's poem there springs the eternally trodden grass by the fence, representative of the eternal Yiddish... The language of metaphors was chosen, that is both the wisdom in the curls of the Vilna Gaon's beard and the dramatically broken 'Golden Age' of prosperity in the interwar period, and the 'healing storm' from the written characters of the Kulbak poem from a cloud of guilt weighing 500 tons which will drench the people and the land in which the mute dead lie resting."

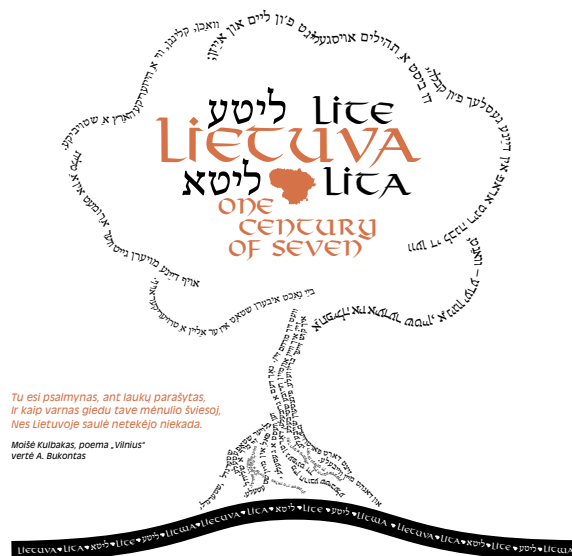
The authors attempted a subtle yet brilliant visual effect in the design of the exhibition which could transmit the main content of the exhibit without reading the texts. Spacious exhibit stands recalling Torah scrolls, the difficult-to-comprehend scale of them and the amount of information presented (metaphorically illustrating the significance of Jewish history in Lithuania and the scope of the destruction of the nation), the calligraphic-poetic compositions--these are the means through which information is transmitted to the visitor through "emotional channels." Also employed for that are suggestive photographs illustrating the text, selected especially appropriately, arranged in cinematic succession, without explanation for every single one, since the photographs here convey emotional content, as an expression. "You just have to view the exhibit with an open heart and let yourself feel these emotional/semantic codes hidden in its images. The symbols used are universal and it is hoped they will reach the heart of a large number of views," Victoria Sideraitė Alon said.

The visitor who reads the poetic text of the exhibit will discover many allusions to well-known details in Lithuanian Jewish history, but whether the specific allusion is understood will depend on the visitor's preparation and knowledge in this area. The main message of the exhibit won't be lost even if the visitor doesn't un-

Kitoks žvilgsnis į žydų vietą ir likimą Lietuvoje istorijos vingiuose

VIENAS AMŽIUS IŠ SEPTYNIŲ Lietuva.Lita.Lite

Kilnojamoji paroda skirta eksponuoti Lietuvos Respublikos ambasadose užsienyje



Rengėjai: Lietuvos Respublikos Užsienio reikalų ministerija • Lietuvos žydų (litvakų) bendruomenė
Kūrėjai: autorius Pranas Morkus • dizaino studija JUDVI • vertėja Olga Lempert • redaktorė Skirma Kondratas • spauda DABAexpo **Partneriai:** Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono žydų muziejus • Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas • Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas • Kauno regioninis valstybės archyvas • M. Mažvydo nacionalinė biblioteka • Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus

In the words of exhibition text author Pranas Morkus, *the suffering of the innocent victims goes on for decade and decade and assumes a reverse, telescopic perspective: the deeper the graves sink, the more lively the faces of the unnamed children, men and women peer from the photo albums, beckoning us to look and to look inside, to be with them and to be them.*

derstand everything. The details are important, but one doesn't have to read all the texts and go deeply into every detail to understand the exhibit.

The creators said they have no doubt there will be viewers who not only read the entire text but also understand the semantic codes hidden in the exhibit, and might even discover additional meanings and layers which could appear as if of their own volition. "When work is from the heart, as it was in the making of this exhibit, additional subtexts often appear in the work which even the authors haven't thought about. And that's the real miracle of creation."

Written by Radvilė Rimgailė-Voicik

TELŠIAI – THE HOUSE OF TORAH STUDY



Tractate Nazir from the Babylonian Talmud



Book labels from Telšiai yeshiva with the date and donator's name

Book title: Tractate Nazir from the Babylonian Talmud

מסכת נזיר מן תלמוד בבלי

Berlin, Julius Zitenfeld publishing house, 1863

Stamp: Library of Great Telz Yeshiva, No. 1279

The Telšiai yeshiva founded in 1875 quickly became one of the main centers of Lithuanian learning. Since 1883 when Eliezer Gordon (1841–1910) assumed leadership while serving as city rabbi, the yeshiva became the Great Yeshiva and its glory was known beyond Lithuania's borders, with students coming from as far away as the USA. One of them was Mordechai Gifter from Baltimore, who recorded his first impressions in Telšiai: "I entered the

house of study and just saw the Torah! Five hundred young men sat and studied... In Lithuania the Torah was visible, because the Torah filled all life. ... Telšiai was the kingdom of the Torah, completely subordinate to the yeshiva. ... Jewish Bank policy, administration of the Yavne girls' school, summer camp for poor children--even the Jewish hospital was built and operated according to the head of the yeshiva's directions. Jews in Diaspora live in a fragmented society, but Telšiai obeys the laws of the Torah. ... Being in Telšiai means being in the house of Torah study, because the entire life of the town is the result of the yeshiva's teaching."

In the late 19th and early 20th century up to 350 students from Lithuania and other countries studied at the yeshiva. The study

process of the Great Yeshiva of Telšiai was aimed at deepening academic learning. Both the main yeshiva and its preparatory section where teenagers studied had rich libraries. After the death Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, Rabbi Josef Leib Bloch (1860–1930), director of the yeshiva, and his son Elijah Meyer Bloch (1895–1955) had personal libraries of rabbinical and academic Judaism literature. A significant portion of the libraries of the yeshiva and its directors is now conserved at the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library, which received the treasures from the Telšiai Regional History Museum (now known as the Alka Žemaitijan Museum) which in turn collected them after the war which carried off the lives of the yeshiva students and their director, Rabbi Yitzchak Bloch (1891–1941). In point of fact the yeshiva was closed down in 1940 under the Soviet regime but the remaining students continued to study, albeit illegally.

The Telšiai Yeshiva was recreated in Cleveland, USA, in 1941 under the initiative of E. M. Bloch at the initiative of yeshiva students and teachers who managed to flee Lithuania for America and escape the Holocaust. In 1971 M. Gifter himself became head of this yeshiva, the same boy from Maryland who studied at the Great Yeshiva of Telšiai which made an indelible impression on him for life.

*Lara Lempertienė,
Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas
Library Judaica Research Centre*

Mikveh Opens in Kaunas

After a break of more than 70 years a mikveh, or Jewish ritual bath, was recently built and opened in the Old Town of Kaunas, thanks to the Kaunas Jewish Center. Mikveh construction was supervised by Rabbi Gedalia Olshtein, a leading world expert in the field. The luxurious mikveh is intended mainly for Israeli students studying in Kaunas, but all female Lithuanian Jews are welcome to use it as well. William Stern, founder and patron of the Kaunas Jewish Center, hung a mezzuzah, a sort of Jewish good-luck charm, on the door frame at the opening ceremony. Rabbis and guests from around the world and representatives of the Kaunas Jewish Community attended the opening ceremony. Rabbi Moshe Sheinfeld, who has lived in Kaunas for six years, was responsible for all the work setting up the mikveh, with help from his wife Racheli. Kęstutis Urniežius was responsible for carrying out and supervising the mikveh's construction. W. Stern expressed his gratitude to Dzoel and Albert Aflalo who manage Matanel-Chulija fund and supported this project financially.

Vilnius Action: Zavl Shul Opens Doors

The historic Zavl synagogue near the Vilnius train station opened its doors to visitors briefly on Sunday, October 1. The building has been undergoing extensive repairs and a full restoration over the last several years after it was returned to the Lithuanian Jewish Community. Several years on now the entire external façade have been restored to its authentic appearance before the Holocaust. The public event featured a series of humble and eclectic art installations by a group of designers located in the women's gallery and on the main floor.

The presentation consisted of ideas, associations and suggestions, not definite projects. They are all connected to the long history of the building and the Jewish presence in Lithuania. The presentations are intended to serve as a jumping-off point for future projects dealing with issues facing many communities in a globalized world: how to weave strands of culture, tradition, heritage, religion, identity and history into the fabric of contemporary life. A team of young designers addressed some important issues concerning the re-emergence of the Zavl Shul into the life of 21st-century Vilnius. It likely will play a role in the continuity of Jewish life in the city, but so far its future function hasn't been determined.

The synagogue on Gėlių street dates back to 1817, when the wealthy merchant and philanthropist Shmuel Zanvil, son of Pesah Germaize and known as Reb Zavl, first established a prayer house in a wooden building on the site. The building burnt down. A year later the whole courtyard was donated to worshippers who promised to build there "a prayer house with a kloyz," a synagogue with a "closed" center for continuous prayer and study. Zavl Kloyz quickly assumed a place of prominence among the synagogues of Vilnius. The synagogue was renovated and expanded in 1892 and 1893 and again in 1896. In 1916 there were 120 regular worshippers. In addition, the kloyz owned a building at Sodų street no. 5 which provided income for the upkeep of the kloyz. In 1921 Khaykl Lunski called it "one of the largest and most important" kloyzn in Vilnius. It operated until 1940. After World War II it housed storage facilities, apartments and a bakery. Since 1990 it has stood empty.

Vilnius Returns Jewish Headstones to Cemetery

In mid-October the Vilnius municipality began sending more than 1,000 metric tons of fragments of Jewish gravestones from different Soviet-era sites around the city to the old Jewish cemetery on Olandų street. In 2016 the History Faculty of Vilnius University began examining gravestone fragments taken from different sites around the city. So far 2,407 fragments have been examined, on 324 of which portions of inscriptions were found, mainly in Hebrew characters. The plan is for all the headstone fragments to be returned to the Jewish cemeteries whence they came.

Vilnius mayor Remigijus Šimašius said: "Modern Vilnius must assess, remember and honor appropriately the history of the city and its residents. The return of a huge number of headstones to their historic and sacred sites demonstrates the respect Vilnius residents have for the Jewish community and the commemoration of the dead. Stones from the disassembled transformer station and other sites in the city where the Soviets used Jewish headstones for construction have already been returned to the Olandų cemetery. Our goal is for all gravestones to be returned to the location where they belong."

Victoria Sideraitė Alon, an architect working with the Vilnius municipality on a project to return the headstones to their historical locations, said: "After the Užupis [Olandų street] cemetery is put in proper order and the respect long due it is returned, it could become a unique attraction, one of the most-visited sites in the capital, important to local residents as well as visitors to the city. Creating an artistically strong symbol of commemoration in this unusually beautiful natural scene would transform the territory ... of the cemetery into an emotionally moving cultural



Photo: Saulius Žiūra

space, while at the same time in a deep and significant way it would recall the recent history of the country, which is worth being proud of."

Last year the Vilnius municipality renovated the 11-hectare Jewish cemetery on Olandų street, opening up paths and alleys, setting up information boards, cleaning up the woods, doing landscaping and basically adapting it for visitors.

The municipality for the last two years has been removing fragments of Jewish headstones used in Soviet-era construction from buildings and sites in the city. Most have been removed now and sent to the cemetery for storage and later examination by experts.

LŽB ADMINISTRACIJOS KONTAKTAI

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Asta Rainytė	Chief. Accountant	(8-5) 212 1676; asta@lzb.lt
Michail Lapida	LJC building security coordinator	8 609 97 334
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Name, Surname	Title	Telephone
Michail Segal	Director	8 650 75939
Ninelė Skudovičiūtė	Information coordinator	(8 5) 261 2114
Rašelė Šeraitė	Social support for children and middle aged people	8 652 13 146
Ema Jakobienė	Program coordinator (food program)	(8 5) 261 1251
Geršonas Taicas	Lecture series	8 689 83 293
Home-care service		(8 5) 261 7244
Volunteer doctors	Medical consultations from 12 noon to 3:00 P.M.	(8 5) 261 1736

LJC CLUB COORDINATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of club	Coordinator	Telephone	E-mail
Dubi Mishpoha Club	Alina Azukaitis	8 695 22 959	alina.roze@gmail.com
Dubi Club	Margarita Koževatova	8 618 00 577	margarita.kozevatova@gmail.com
Ilan Club	Liza Shapiro	8 655 27 411	
Knafaim Club	Arina Kac Edvinas Puslys	8 685 86 410 8 645 76 606	
Camp counselor school	Liza Shapiro	8 655 27 411	
Student Union	Amit Belaitė	8 693 80 038 8 692 27 326	amit.belaite@gmail.com
Young Families Club	Aleksandra Chenkin- Zitkauskienė	8 659 52 604	
Gešer Club	Žana Skudovičienė	8 678 81 514	zanas@sc.lzb.lt
Abi men zet zich Club	Žana Skudovičienė	8 678 81 514	zanas@sc.lzb.lt
Union of Former Ghetto and Concentration Camp Prisoners	Fania Brancovskaja Gita Grinmanienė	(8 5) 212 7074	gita1939@yahoo.com

WRITE US!

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BAGEL SHOP



א קלייט פון בייגל
beigelių krautuvelyė

WORKING HOURS

H-V 11:00 - 20:00

V 11:00 - 17:00

VI SHABBAT/CLOSED

VII 12:00 - 17:00



BAGELS		BAKED GOODS		BAGEL TOAST	
Bagel	0.85 €	Interleach (100 gr.)	1.80 €	# with cream cheese & tomatoes	2.50 €
Mini Bagel	0.50 €	Bagels (gr.)	1.20 €	# with cream cheese & blueberry/raspberry jam	2.00 €
Israeli Bagel	1.10 €	Latvian (100 gr.)	1.20 €	# with hummus & tomatoes	2.50 €
Roll	1.10 €	Friday Chafetz small	1.20 €	# toasted with mozzarella cheese	3.60 €
Big Pitta	1.10 €	Friday Chafetz	2.40 €	# toasted with cream cheese	2.00 €
Small Pitta	0.60 €	Maria cake (100 gr.)	1.50 €		
BAGELS &		SALAT		HUMMUS &	
1. Smoked Salmon, Cream Cheese, Red Onion, Tomato & capers	5.60 €	Israeli	2.00 €	House hummus, veggies & bagel	5.90 €
2. Whitefish Salad, mayo, & Sweet Cucumber	5.60 €	Tuna & egg	3.00 €	Roasted	1.80 €
3. Egg Salad with mayo & sundried tomatoes	5.60 €	Mozzarella & beef	3.00 €	Forshim	1.80 €
4. Cream Cheese & looke, tomatoes	2.50 €			Gefite fish on special occasions	5.80 €
5. House hummus & sundried tomatoes, artichoke	5.60 €	PICA BAGEL			
6. Bulten & red onion	6.00 €	Mozzarella, cherry tomatoes & olives	5.60 €		
7. Tuna salad & pickle	5.60 €	WATER			
8. Bulten & sprout and pickle	5.60 €	Sparkling	1.50 €	COFFEE	
9. Cream Cheese & blueberry jam	2.50 €	Still	1.50 €	Black	1.50 €
10. Bagel and butter	1.20 €	JUICE		Latte	2.00 €
SOUP		WAGO pomagala, apple, orange, tomato	1.50 €	Hotto	1.50 €
Soup of the day	2.0 €	Freshly squeezed orange or lemon	1.50 €	Black/green/fruit	1.20 €
Mitko Knidelach	2.0 €	BEER		ISRAELI WINE	
		Saikkila	3.00 €	GAULA (Sukkot)	7.00 €
				YACZEN (Sukkot)	4.00 €
				DEGTINE	
					1.00 €

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

USEFUL INFORMATION

Simas Levinas, chairman of Vilnius Jewish Religious Community,
e-mail sinagoga1903@gmail.com

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

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

Synagogue telephone: (8 5) 261 2523

Vilnius Jewish Cemetery (Sudervės way No. 28, Vilnius) open:
workdays and Sunday from 9:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.; closed on Saturday.
Telephone: (8 5) 250 54 68

SUPPORT

THE LITHUANIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

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On the cover - contemporary dance theater AURA performance during opening ceremony of Sugihara week. Photo: Laura Vansevičienė.

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