



VILNA GAON STATE JEWISH MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER 13

September 18th, 2009

Dear Friends of the Jewish Museum in Vilnius/Vilne,

5770 Shana Tova! Mazl Tov!

We are happy to have the opportunity to talk to you today, at the eve of Rosh ha Shana and congratulate you with this Holy day.

Dear Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum friends and visitors, patrons and partners

Thank you for being with us for the last two decades of our activity.

An old poster of 1922 displayed in the Tolerance Center of the Museum names a group or persons, taking part in a festivity in Paris and among them we can see Igor Stravinsky, Pablo Picasso, Jacques Lipchitz and Man Ray, the revolutionary photographer – these are the people who laid foundations for XX century art. Not a few of them were Litvaks. It was hardly imaginable, when we started, that works of the people who were part of the World and Parisian culture then, would make their way to Vilnius after all the calamities of the XX century.

But this happened in our times. During the current -- the Museum's 20st anniversary -- year we were hosting a big Man Ray exhibition which became part of the chain of events united under the Vilnius-Culture Capital of Europe 2009 title. Man Rays parents stem from the Tsar's time Lithuania.

Now, this is only a small feature of our day-to-day work, which tries to unite the past, present and the future.

It is hard to believe, but already 20 years have passed since the Jewish Museum reappeared in the Jerusalem of the North as Lithuania has reappeared on the world map. This was in 1989. This year it's time to remind ourselves that during the Holocaust the remnants of Lithuanian Jewish heritage were saved by the intellectuals, such as Abraham Sutzkaver and Abba Kovner and Shmerke Katkherginsky, in the ghetto cellars and the forests, and upon these remnants – say, a sculpture, a document, a letter or a book – the Jewish Museum in Vilnius was rebuilt after WWII - soon to be closed by Stalin during one of the regime's anti-Semitic campaigns.

In 1989 a young Lithuanian scholar Emanuelis Zingeris, a signatar to the Act of the newly-won Lithuanian Independence, leading a group of friends, took on an initiative to restore

The newsletter was compiled by Lukas Dunser, Adalbert Wagner and Milda Jakulyte-Vasil, based on museum staff texts and edited by Rachel Kostanian..



the museum. Among them our dear Rachel Kostanian who contributed her life to the Museum as Deputy Director and Head of the Holocaust Department.

By now our museum functions as a National Institution across the Capital and Lithuania and we can boast of thousands of artefacts in our collections, among which are the classics of Litvak art such as Jacques Lipchitz and Pinchus Kremegne and Nehemya Arbitblatas, and Mane Katz, and not less than 6000 photographs (of which almost half are already digitalized). We're proud of our publications (too many to be listed in the Foreword) and soon we plan to publish the first comprehensive guide to the Jerusalem of Lithuania. We are proud of our displays (too numerous to be listed in this bulletin) and in the early fall we're going to open a new permanent feature of the Museum - the interactive exhibition *Shoa in the Eyes of a Child*.

Our display in the ominously silent pine forests of the Holocaust site of Ponar will open at the end of this summer, renovated with the new stands and artefacts and it is here that we will present our new feature – a life-size reconstruction of a grim, but the “one and only” Holocaust exhibit of a kind. This is a huge body transporting aggregate used by the Burners' Brigade to deliver piles of shot people to the burning pits.

In the further pages of this bulletin you will find much more about the Museum's activity. In the meantime I wish you all the very best and appeal to you, dear friends, to continue to sponsor the Museum (which may be facing hard times again during the current economic crisis) financially and, also, by artefacts, photographs and by Judaic books donated to the Museum's library.

But, of course, you support us just by your letters and your visits.

Stay happy, healthy and engaged,

Cordially,

Markas Zingeris
Director

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Some words from Rachel Kostanian

It is my honor to speak up to you as usual at this unimaginable twenty years jubilee of the Jewish Museum. Who'd believe that, at the end of the 80's of the 20th Century! I'd like to pay your attention to some of our great achievements. Among *Books* it is necessary to mention the one about the small Ghettos of Vilnius' district which reveals one more page of the history of Lithuanians Jewish Ghettos, continuing the museum research on this topic.

The beautiful book-album "They Lived in Vabalninkas"(Vabolnik) is another very important historical piece dedicated to people who lived there, once upon a time.

As for *Exhibitions* I'd add that one about the shtetl Butrimonys(Butrimantz), devoted to the courageous survivor Riva Bogomolnaja who witnessed the massacre of the shtetl's entire Jewish community. A nicely arranged brochure followed.

As usual we guided our guests and visitors over sights of Jewish history and Holocaust in Lithuania and are mostly happy to mention the support (material and moral) of Sir Martin Gilbert, Lord Janner, prof. Dovid Katz, Myra Sklarew, the known daughter Faye Ran of the famous father Leyzer Ran, the miraculous survivor and tutor Michael Good, also Simon Malkes, Lazar Greisdorf, John Shlapabersky, Leone Rosenberg and Gene Le Perre, our yearly supporter. Thank you everyone and you, Gene, for all you do!

Special thanks go to our recent great supporter and writer Shivaun Woolfson and her closest partner Frances for their excellent project "Surviving History" about ten Jewish people from Vilnius who carry their Memory from previous home up to now, here in Vilnius, it is introduced on the 10th of September in the museum's Tolerance Centre.

We want to congratulate and share with you the honor expressed to Rachel Margolis, our ex-staff member, this wonderful, wise and brave leading person in the team that created the Shoa exhibition here, the first exhibition in the Baltics, Russia and other neighboring countries. She is compiler of the Ponary Diary and author of her own memoir *A Flash of Light in the Darkness*. She was honored in recent months by the United States Congress, the British House of Lords and an array of Holocaust related organizations around the world. The special event took place on the 19th of June in Leivick's House, Tel Aviv.



We wish her much health, optimism and still hope to see her here in her beloved mother-city Vilne, in our museum among the loving staff.

We'd like to congratulate our Jewish Community with the great success of the III. Litvak Congress.

Zayt ale gezunt und stark
Rachel Kostanian



THE HOLOCAUST EXHIBITION (THE GREEN HOUSE)

For over a year it took us- our new volunteer from the Gedenkdienst, Austria- Berti Wagner and myself, to come to the last points in our new guidebook over the exhibition "The Catastrophe" It was a check and read and proof work. Our aim was to include not only facts and figures but also support guests by a documentary source. The guide embraces the main events during the pre-Nazi period and in time of the Holocaust.

Based on the last researches in Lithuania and abroad, we speak on the issue of the "Lithuanian partisans" and their role in annihilation of the Lithuanian Jews. The murderers were poorly organized groups from various localities as it is reflected in an article by dr. Anusauskas, where he states for example that the supposed murderers might have come to the "Lietukis garage" (locality of the most despicable pogrom in Kaunas) from the security dpt., where Jews were driven to the garage, and a Surmas, supposedly a German agent, might have come from a near gymnasium where set to free soviet prisoners spent a night, others might have come from a partisan funeral, etc.

In one word it was a spontaneously come-together team united by one furious will: *Kill the Communist Jews!*

We have introduced into our exhibition some more topics: the "church and the Jews", Lithuanian pro-Nazi authorities on the murder of Jews (Z. Blynas), in the panel of the ghetto, a Lithuanian librarian witness and so on. In some time we shall conclude our guidebook by updates of some other Ghettos in Lithuania (Siauliai, Oshmena and others). The next big work we did was the renovation of five panels and creation of three new ones in our branch in Paneriai. We introduced a panel on the Ghetto Vilna, whose victims were devoured by the black holes of the Paneriai pits, a panel on murdered children there and a panel on the murderers- the special Unit- Ypatingas Burys- Sonderkommando: the perpetrators.

We also reconstructed five panels on the unique escape of the "body burners brigade".

Lots of efforts and strain have been put into all this painstaking work, lots of barriers were overcome. We have at last an exhausting introductory text, explaining what was this place for. And now it is for you to judge about the results.

And the last but not least: one of the most important museum's artifacts as mentioned by our director- the restored transporter (by using which dead bodies were carried on and thrown into the bonfires) found its way, was fastened and is exposed now there, at the place where it belongs to.

Work is still going on a video show to illustrate by images what is our message about. We still hope to improve the exhibition and we have more plans ahead.

Rachel Kostanian





PANERIAI



The Paneriai Memorial Museum is a small building outside of Vilnius 16 kilometers away from the city center. During this year we renovated parts of the exhibition, which wasn't changed for a long time. The Exhibit at the Paneriai Memorial Museum utilizes photographs of Jews murdered at Paneriai, orders and other documents issued by the occupying power and found in the area of the massacres, clothing, shoes and prisoners' work tools. The memorial itself includes burial pits, corpse-burning clearings and commemorative statues.

In 1940 on the eve of WWII the Soviet military authority ordered a military base established here. Seven deep pits were prepared for holding liquid fuel. The Nazis who occupied Vilnius in June, 1941, used this site for mass murder. The museum was opened in 1960 at the mass murder site (at that time it was a branch of the Vilnius Museum) where people, mainly Jews but also other ethnicities were murdered during WWII (from 50,000 up to 100,000 depending on sources consulted). In 1962 the Paneriai Museum was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Museum of the Revolution. In 1985 a new museum building was built and the exhibition overhauled. The territory was also renovated under architect Janutis Makariunas—the small roads were asphalted, the burial pits were renovated and commemorative stones with Russian and Lithuanian inscriptions were erected. After Lithuanian independence on the initiative of Jewish community member Adomas Jacovskis the first memorial stone with inscriptions in Hebrew, Yiddish, Lithuanian and Russian announced that 70,000 Jews were murdered here.

In 1991 the Paneriai Museum was transferred to the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum. This year, Paneriai Memorial Museum celebrate its 50th opening Anniversary. Part of the museum's exhibition was renovated. There had been little about the main victims- the Jews, so new panels were installed: the Vilna Ghetto and its "actions", the work of the body burners brigade, the unique escape of twelve body burners and about the murderers.

It was one point on the Third World Litvak Congress' program.

Speaker of the Seimas Arūnas Valinskas, chairman of the Jewish community of Lithuania Dr. Simonas Alperavičius, Israeli Ambassador H.E. Mr. Chen Ivri Apter, Representatives of the Union of Former Ghetto and KZ Prisoners, Chief Rabbi of Vilnius and Lithuanian Chaim Burstein and a lot of congress participants participated in the Memorial event for victims of the Holocaust at the Paneriai memorial.





The Tolerance Center

Located in the former Jewish theater, our Centre of Tolerance is the venue for many events associated with Jewish life and history. It is visited by children and adults and provides guided tours, host conferences and exhibitions.

Exhibitions

„The Journey to Negev“ (2008 09 19 – 11 10)– the exhibition of the pastels and textiles of Jewish–Lithuanian artist Mina Levitan-Babenskienė. The symbolic Jewish motif repeats in the art works of the famous creator Mina Levitan Babenskienė, dictated by her sub consciousness, it reveals the search of her ethnical identity.

„Junctures and Discoveries“ (2008 11 16 – 12 15)– exhibition of Lithuanian artists, dedicated to the International Day of Tolerance. The rich cultural heritage and the recent topicalities of national minorities living in our country became the inspiration for the art works, presented to this exhibition. “Junctures and Discoveries” stimulated Lithuanian artists to open up to the usually “unknown, different” world, to lift up sometimes the impersonal meaning of the word “tolerance”, to find out it's new and interesting meaning, which would induce the spread of creation of professional art in our society. These processes would lead to tolerance education, historical truth, freedom of thought, human rights, spread of the enlightenment and the empathy for the different cultures.

„Jewish, Tartar and Karaite Sacral Buildings“ (2008 12 19 – 2009 01 15)- educational exhibition, prepared by **dr. Vilma Gradinskaitė**. This exhibition presents the architecture of Jewish, Tartar and Karaite sacral buildings and introduces the conditions, related to the origins of the constructions, influenced by customs and the religions of each nation.

„If I Forget Thee...“ (2009 01 26 – 04 23)– the exhibition, dedicated for the International Holocaust Memorial Day. This exhibition, prepared by Dalija Epšteinaitė, quondam longevous museum employee, is devoted to the memory of Butrimony's Jewish Community and is based on Riva's Lozansky-Bogomolnaya remembrance and collected photos. The exposition has the concomitant catalogue „If I Forget Thee...“ (2009), published by Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum. More information about the fate of the Butrimony's Jewish Community is included (Designers Jūratė Razumienė and Aleksandra Jacovskytė).

„Karl Plagge – Righteous Among the Nations“ (2009 04 07 – 05 11)- educational exhibition from Germany, History Workshop of Darmstadt, is dedicated to the memory of Karl Plagge, and to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust in Lithuania. Karl Plagge was a Major in the German Wehrmacht and was in command of the vehicle repair unit (HKP Ost/562) on Olandu Street in Vilnius from 1941 to 1944. Polish workers and numerous Ghetto prisoners were employed as forced laborers at the HKP. Karl Plagge was awarded the honorary title



'Righteous Among the Nations' by the Israeli Holocaust Memorial Yad Vashem in 2005, for his part in saving the lives of over 250 Jews in Vilna.

„Man Ray. Magician and Discoverer“ (2009 04 30 – 06 25) - the works of Man Ray – great Jewish, American and French artist, one of the world's best known photographers of the 20th century, creator of the experimental movies, and pioneer of Dadaism and Surrealism – were exhibited at the Centre of Tolerance of Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum. Man Ray, born in the United States of America, a child of East European Jewish emigrants, reached his creative maturity in Paris. In his personality he embodies the idea of contemporary cosmopolitanism. The exhibition “Man Ray. Magician and Discoverer” contained 40 photographs, restored from conserved photographic negatives using the original techniques of the author. The photographs were brought here from Poland, “Positive Image” Foundation, and originally traveled from the Man Ray Archive in Paris in cooperation with the Man Ray Trust.

Another section of the exhibit featured a multimedia presentation of fragments of Man Ray's films archival interviews, art works and more than 1200 photographs, drawings, photographic frames of objects d'art presented in 3-D format.

Only with united efforts of our museum, of the American Centre, the French Cultural Centre and the Ministry of Culture of Lithuania we could enjoy this world-renowned exhibition; being exhibited in Vilnius, in the year, when Vilnius became a “Capital of European Culture – 2009”. We are happy that exhibition “Man Ray. Magician and Discoverer” is included into “Vilnius – European Capital of Culture 2009” program.

“The Pathways of the Promised Land” (2009 05 14 – 06 14)– exhibition of drawings from Israel by artist Filomena Linčiūtė – Vaitiekūnienė.

“144 Biblical Miniatures” (2009 07 05 – 08 04) – the exhibition, presented by the Embassy of Israel to Latvia and Lithuania. Twenty-eight artists, members of the Israel Miniature Art Society (IMAS) founded in 1996, created the 144 miniatures using acrylic, paint, ink, oil paints and mixed media, inspired by scenes from the Old Testament. In some of the works biblical tales are portrayed abstractly, in others scenes are rendered super-realistically, while in still others there are purely symbolic images.

„The power of Civil Society: the Fate of Jews in Bulgaria“(2009 08 06- 09 03) – the educational exhibition, presented by the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria with the cooperation with Embassy of Israel to Latvia and Lithuania. This exhibition is prepared by the Institute for Culture of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria. The exhibition comprises 22 stands with photographs, document copies and text showing the sequence of the events under consideration and social and political processes in Bulgaria. The story of the Jews in Bulgaria is unique. It is an example, showing that the fate of the Jewish people of the other regions of the Nazi occupied European territories could have been different. But all „beautiful stories“ have their „dark side“, and in this case it's – 11 343 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia who were murdered in Treblinka. The movie „Beyond Hitler's Grasp“ (2000), directed by Nitzan Aviram, dedicated to these victims of Holocaust, was shown during the opening of the exhibition.



New Exhibition

Surviving History: Portraits From Vilna

10 September – 9 October 2009

Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum Tolerance Centre

This exhibition presents the life stories of ten individuals from Lithuania who survived the Holocaust in Lithuania where ninety-five percent of the 240,000-strong pre-war Jewish population was annihilated. It explores the points of intersection where the personal and the collective collide. Drawing on an interdisciplinary range of media: photography, video, text, archival documentation, visual biography and biographical objects, it seeks to express how history is lived from the inside. Escape from the Vilna ghetto, the partisan forts in the forest, the burning of a synagogue filled with women and children in Ziezmariai, all of these events are transmitted from an individual perspective. Glimpses of the personal, typically absent from the historical record, are afforded prominence here. The exhibition comprises 5 segments: photo exhibition, visual biography art installations, video diaries presentation, memorial installation and the screening of a short documentary. Developed and produced by the UK-based non profit Living Imprint, it features the work of artists from the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States of America. For more information, visit: www.livingimprint.org/survivinghistory





NEW EXHIBITION



If I Forget Thee

An exhibition on the annihilated Jewish community of Butrimony and their tragic fate during the Holocaust is based on photographs and reminiscences collected by Riva Lozanski-Bogomolnaja (1920-2002). She was one of only 15 people from Butrimony who escaped death during the mass murder of Jews. According to data from 1930, Butrimony was home to 887 Jews. On September 9, 1941, 740 Jews were shot in Butrimony.. On that day the communities of Butrimony, Stakliskes and Punia were annihilated. Riva Lozanski-Bogomolnaja dedicated her life to immortalise the victims' names.

After the war ended, she walked around the town and went from house to house in order to collect personal photographs and abandoned items which were things no one was concerned about. Some people who had inhabited the empty houses simply gave them to her, others asked for money or alcohol. She collected more than 500 photographs and over many years identified and indexed them in order to tell the world what happened to the Jews of Butrimony.

Each photo represents a life story, described and preserved in her notebook. The photographs form a mosaic of the life of the Jewish community, as described in Riva Lozanski-Bogomolnaja's books published in Russian and English. The exhibition is composed of 12 stands that tell the story of peoples' lives and needs before the war, and about the bestiality of the Holocaust.. The stands contain many photographs of the Jewish community of Butrimony. Authentic items from the inter-war period, that belonged to Riva Lozanski-Bogomolnaja and other Jews from Butrimony, complement the stand exhibits.

A catalog in English and Lithuanian accompanies the exhibit, called "If I Forget Thee" providing additional historical material.

*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I don't remember thee,
let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.
(Ps, 137, 5-6)*

Curator Dalija Epsteinaitė
Staff that contributed to it: Galina Zirikova, Ruta Puisyte, Josif Levinson
Design Jurate Razumiene, Aleksandra Jacovskyte



The Rescued Lithuanian Jewish child tells about Shoah

(permanent exhibition in the Tolerance Centre. Opening is planned for September 22, 2009)

The exhibition aims to convey in a decisive form the scope of the Holocaust in Lithuania through the rescued Lithuanian Jewish children's personal stories and their individual experience, by using modern means – computer terminal, with extended textual, photo, audio and video material, authentic recollections of the rescued people. The aim is to introduce to the Lithuanian people and other Museum visitors the story of Rescue in Lithuania coming together with the most tragic pages of the destruction of the Lithuanian Jewish community. The exhibition gives visitors a chance to hear from survivors' own lips about what happened in Lithuania during the World War II.

Materials that are used for the exhibition were collected by the Department of Righteous of the Lithuanian State Jewish Museum in tight cooperation with the Yad Vashem. The Department of Righteous together with Yad Vashem authority searched the survivors and tried to disclose the exactly circumstances of their rescue.

From the very beginning of the German invasion in Lithuania local Jews were deprived of their rights, they were persecuted and massacred. Systemic mass annihilation of Jews in Lithuania started in July 1941. Jews were murdered nearby every city and town – firstly men, later – women and kids. About 200 000 people out of 220 000-240 000 of the Jewish population perished during the Nazis occupation. Most of them were murdered during the first five months of the German invasion.





The Jewish children, confronted by the irresistible, destructive forces, were at the highest risk. Every Jewish child was marked for destruction by the Nazi ideology. After executions in summer and autumn of 1941 there were only several thousand of Jewish children left in Lithuania who were confined with the adults in Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai ghettos. The life of those children who were fortunate to survive through multiple actions was full of constant fear of detection and trials, sometimes impossible to bear and imagine. Their experience was different: some of the Jewish children who were hidden in Lithuanian villages changed dozens of farmers' families who hid them; newborn babies or infants were often hidden in nurseries, orphanages or convents. A lot of those children lost not only their parents and families, but also their personal and national identity.





FROM THE MUSEUM STOCKS: Newly-acquired and restored artworks

The exhibition, opened at the Tolerance Centre in August 2009 and dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the museum, displays the most significant works of art, which have been added to the stocks of the museum over the last two years. They have enriched two important collections: *the art and iconography of the Litvaks* and the *Jews' life in Lithuania*.

The newly-acquired works of art which have been added to the collection of the Litvaks' art account for most of the



exhibition. They are pictures by world famous Jewish painters of Lithuanian origin, and reflect the tendencies of the artistic language, expression and stylistics of the last century: Jehudo Epstein (1870–1946), Pinchus Kremegne (1890–1981) Max Band (1900–1974), Yehezkel Streichman (1906–1993), Nehemia Arbit Blatas (1908–1999), Alexander Bogen (b. 1916) and Moshe Rozentalis (1922–2008).

The collection of art and iconography which reflects the life of Jews in Lithuania has acquired several very valuable works of art over recent years: drawings by Walter Buhe (1882–1958), a painter and graphic artist of German origin. They depict views of Jewish Vilnius in 1915 and 1916. Among them is the courtyard-compound of Vilnius synagogues (Shulhoif), as well as the 1924 project of the interior of a synagogue in Kaunas by the artist and architect Vladimiras Dubeneckis. The series of the restored works of graphic art. The restoration activities carried out by the museum is represented at the exhibition by the series of prints by Ukrainian Jewish artist Artur Kolnik (1890–1972); the prints belonged to the post-war Jewish museum. It was restored by Paulius Zovė at the P. *Gudynas* Restoration centre in 2008.

(Text by Dr. Aistė Niunkaitė Račiūnienė, Head of the Fonds department)



NEW BOOKS

PUBLISHED IN 2008 AND 2009

They Lived in Vabalninkas 1925 – 1941



The small town Vabalninkas is located near Panevezys. By 1858 half of its population were Jews. By 1940 approx. 120 Jewish families (600 people) live in the town. Within one day, on August 26, 1941, all remaining parts of its Jewish population have been killed in the Zadeikiai Woods.

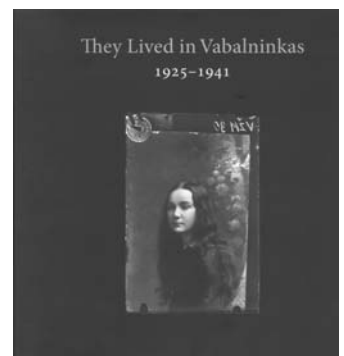
The tragedy of the fate of the Vabalninkas Jews continues - its not

talked about by present-day inhabitants – the Jews of Vabalninkas have been forgotten.

This book with the published photographs reveal the images of a world before being destroyed. Between 1925 and 1941 photographer and chronicler Juozas Daubaras made hundreds of photos of the towns inhabitants. He gave his collection into the hands of Alfonsas Streikus who later passed a part of it, the Judaica material, to the Jewish Museum. So most glass plate negatives and photographs are now among the collection of the Jewish Museum. That became possible thanks to our dear Michael Erenburg who is no more among the living to see the results of his efforts.

The Album is published in English and Lithuanian language. It contains beside plenty of portraits, group- and family photographs and photographs of daily life, an introduction by the compiler of the book, Dalia Epsteinaitė. The Album with all its pictures is not just standing as a memorial for the annihilated community of Vabalninkas – it's an example for an average Jewish community living in a small Lithuanian town – it stands as an example for the unknown faces of the majority of Jews being killed during the dark days of the Shoah.

Compiled by D. Epsteinaitė
2009, 167 pp. With photographs
ISBN: 978-9955-736-25-7 in English
ISBN: 978-9955-736-24-0 in Lithuanian
24 EUR / 43 USD





The Ghettos of Oshmyany, Svir, Svenyionys Regions: Lists of Prisoners



The Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum is continuing the publication of the lists of the ghetto inmates based on unique archival documents related to the general population census carried out in the General Area of Lithuania in May, 1942. The original census documents, the ghetto prisoner lists among them, are part of the holdings of the Central State Archive of Lithuania.

The lists of ghetto prisoners of Švenčionys, Oshmyany and Svir included in the publication are official documents, which reflect in greater detail who was in the ghettos of these regions in May, 1942. The published lists do not include the names of those people who were murdered during the Akcionen prior to May of 1942, nor those whose names were not included in the

census sheets for various reasons. The book presents the data included in the census questionnaires: date and place of birth, kinship, education, specialty or occupation, place of work.

Illustrations published in this book, including photographs from various museum funds, archives and personal collections as well as pictures shot expressly for this book, provide a deeper impression in the History.

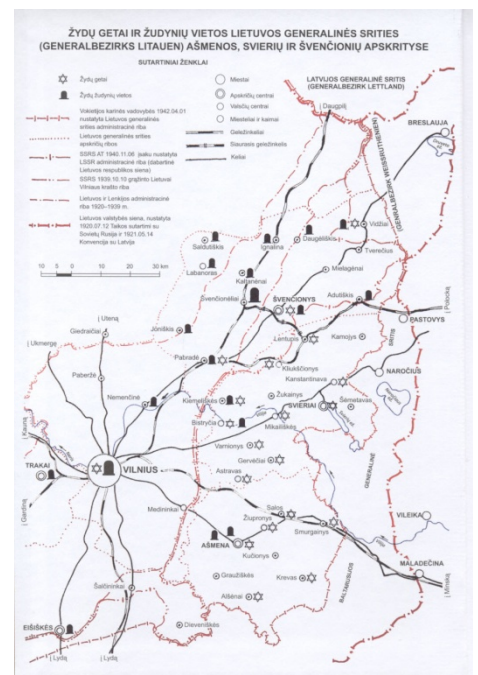
The book presents tables with the prisoner numbers of the ghettos, an index of names, the professions and places of residence of the ghetto prisoners listed.

The publication includes an article by historian Arūnas Bubnys. We hope that this book will help to advance examination of one of the most tragic pages in the history of the Lithuanian and Belarussian Jews.

"I know that it has taken a long time to get it completed and published but it seems to have been well worth it. The Claims Conference is pleased to have been a partner in this important endeavor."

—Greg Schneider, Executive Vice President of the Claims Conference

Compiled by Irina Guzenberg, Olga Movšovič and Jevgenija Sedova
2009, 720 pp. English, Lithuania and Russian
ISBN 978-9955-767-02-2
40 EUR/ 60 USD





IN THE DEPARTMENT OF

RESCUE AND THE RIGHTEOUS

Like every year this year too the Righteous Gentiles Department together with the Embassy of Israel in Riga and the Lithuanian Jewish Community held two ceremonies of awarding the Righteous Among the Nations. The first was held on 21 March 2009 at the Assembly Hall (Great Aula) of Vilnius University. Sixteen rescuers were awarded (fourteen of them posthumously). The Israeli Minister for Social Affairs Isaac Herzog and Israeli Ambassador (to) for Lithuania and Latvia Chen Ivri handed out the awards. The chairman of the Lithuanian Jewish Community Simonas Alperavičius addressed the rescuers awarded. Morta Kalendraitė-Jakutienė was one of them. Her parents and sisters helped to save Itzik and Sonia Gordimer and their children Jona (later George) and Shalom (later Seymour). The story of the rescue of this family is one of the rare cases in Lithuania when all the members of one family survived. Sholom Gordimer lived with the Kalendra family from November 1943 until the summer of 1945. The families of the relatives and friends of the Kalendra hid the other members of the family. After the war the Gordimer family emigrated to the USA. In the 1990s George found his rescuers Andrejus Kalendra's three daughters, Steponas Garbačiauskas' children and Antanas Plechavičius' daughter and entered into correspondence with them.



Tekstas po nuotrauka: This photograph was taken at the end of the war: Morta Kalendraitė, 18, (married name Jakutienė) is handing over the rescued boy whom everyone called Simas (Seymour Gordimer) to his father Itzik Gordimer. Andrejus Kalendra, his wife and daughter Morta were deported to Siberia in 1951, where he died in 1952.



The second Righteous Gentiles awards ceremony was held at the museum's Centre for Tolerance on 25 August 2009 during the third congress of the Litvaks. At the same time the preview of the exhibition/education centre —Rescued Lithuanian Jewish Child Tells about the Shoah was held and the exhibition devoted to the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum was introduced to the participants. Many guests from abroad and Lithuania were present: the Israeli Ambassador Chen Ivry, Israeli Minister of Information and Diaspora Yuli Yoel Edelstein and Lithuanian deputy Minister Asta Skaisgirytė–Liauškienė. The famous musicians – the singer Liora Grodnikaitė and the pianist Leonid Dorfman – performed Ravel's —Kaddish||. During the ceremony twenty-three Lithuanian nationals received medals and certificates of honor of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority. We are happy that Vytautas Anevičius, Jonina Peregoud's (Kleinaitė) rescuer, was able to come and was honoured with the medal. The Israeli ambassador to Latvia and Lithuania, Chen Ivry, and Simonas Alperavičius, the chairman of the Lithuanian Jewish Community, handed out the awards.

An exceptional feature of the ceremony was that fourteen saviors of the members of one family, the Kuklianskys, were honoured. Moshe Kukliansky recalls:

—I have an exceptional feeling of love, honor, the greatest sympathy and endless gratitude to our rescuers, supporters and their families, and their descendants for the help they extended, in most cases on the initiative the rescuers. Those emotions are so strong and lasting that neither time nor distance can weaken them. What is more interesting is that my wife and my brother's wife, my sister's husband, our seven children and twenty grandchildren and great grandchildren —caught all these emotions without any effort on our side. Some of them know our long odyssey as well as we do and have taken a very active part in keeping in touch with our rescuers and their descendants and in the efforts to immortalize their actions.

Our family was caught in the terrible whirlpool of death. Soon we lost our mother who was only forty-four. The lives of four members of the family – our father, the fifty-three-year old chemist and pharmacist Shaul Kukliansky, I, eighteen then, my sister, fifteen, and my eleven-year-old brother, hung by a thread. Death pits and the precipice of destruction for three years threatened us. But every time when the thread on which we hung was in danger of snapping either because of exhaustion or injuries, a guardian angel would appear out of nowhere, without our having to ask for help. Risking everything that he or she held dear they did not let the thread snap, extending our lives until the next perhaps an inescapable threat.

Our rescuers acted alone, spontaneously, prompted by their humaneness and love for fellow creatures, wishing to help and save. They would often act secretly, without telling their relatives or the closest neighbours. They would make hideouts and gave us bread, risking their own and their families' lives, wellbeing and property. They were different from others, and their numbers were not large. But they existed, and dangers notwithstanding, they acted and rescued people. It was extremely difficult for them and they deserve the highest honors.

At the end of the ceremony Moshe Kukliansky, members of his family and the descendants of their rescuers saw the exhibition —Rescued Lithuanian Jewish Child Tells about the Shoah and the stand devoted to the story of how their family was rescued.



Conferences, concerts, lectures, presentations, seminars, commemorations and meetings

The **Genocide Day of Lithuanian Jews** was commemorated at the Centre of Tolerance. On the 22nd of September, 2008, The Centre of Tolerance of Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, in cooperation with the International Historical Commission, presented the feature film „**Ghetto**“ (2005), followed by a discussion with it's director **Audrius Juzėnas**. During the time of the educational event an exhibition of the photographs of schoolchildren from Lithuania, Israel, Italy and Poland „**Glance into the Past**“ was exhibited in the hall of the Centre of Tolerance.

„**The Holocaust in Lithuania 1941 – 1944**“– lecture by Gabriel Fawcett, a historian from Germany, for the students from private Haberdasher's Aske's school in Great Britain. The group of 20 students visited the Centre of Tolerance on the 23rd of October, 2008.

The official visit of the director of the French cultural center **Mr. Pascal Hanse** and Cultural etache of France, **Mr. Audelin Chappuis**, to the Centre of Tolerance.

On the 5th of November, 2008, an educational event, dedicated to the victims of the “Kristallnacht”, took place. “**Remembering the “Kristallnacht in Lithuania**” – a lecture by the professor Šarūnas Liekis. Also presentation of the booklet “Austria's Unique Approach to Cooperation in Holocaust Research and Education” (2008), happened in the collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Austria in Vilnius.

From January 27th, 2009, to February 27th, 2009, the Tolerance Centre opened the doors for Lithuanian Schools. Students had a possibility to see the permanent exhibition „The Lost World“ followed by guided tour around the museum, as well as to see „If I Forget Thee...“ exhibition and a short documentary „Jewish Vilna“ (1938), for free. This educational program was **dedicated to the International Holocaust Memorial Day**, stretching to a whole month the educational activities.

The presentation of the professor's Antanas Andrijauskas book „Litvak Art in the Context of the *Ecole de Paris*“ took place in the Centre of Tolerance on the 5th of March, 2009. This event happened in cooperation with „Vilnius Auction“ company, the releasers of the book. During the presentation the movie about one of the Litvaks artists, Jacque Lipchitz, „Portrait of an Artist“ (dir.W.Bassett, 1977) was shown.

„**The March of the Living**“ participants from various European countries gathered in the Tolerance Centre to be officially welcomed in Vilnius, on the 19th of April, 2009. Holocaust survivors or their relatives were invited to Lithuania by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Departament of national minorities and the lithuanians living abroad to reveal the tragic story of WWII and to make sure the cruelties of the Holocaust will never be forgotten. Participants had a chance to see the exhibits of the Centre of Tolerance and to study the quondam exhibition „Karl Plagge – Righteous Among the nations“. Among the visitors where were Mr. Simon F. Malkes, the boy rescued by Karl Plagge himself, during the WWII, and Ms. Marianne Wrobel, the niece of Karl Plagge.



TASKS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Books published:

„The ghettos of Ašmena, Svieriai, Švenčionys regions: lists of prisoners. 1942“. Published at the end of 2008 – beginning 2009, 720 p. Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum. Supplement to the almanac „The Jewish Museum“. Compiled by Irin Guzenberg, Olga Movšovič, Jevgenija Sedova. In Lithuanian, English and Russian.

„They lived in Vabalninkas 1925-1941“, 2009, 167 p., compiled by D. Epšteinaitė. In Lithuanian and English.

This album about the fate of Vabalninkas Jews is based on photographs taken by prewar photographer Juozas Daubaras.

Catalogue of the movable exhibition „If I Forget Thee...“, dedicated to the fate of the Jews of Butrimonys town during the II World war. Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2009.

Among the articles published:

- Murauskaitė I. *World-view of Lithuanian Jew in prose of Chaim Grade (stories Neila and White Headscarf)*. In: Studies of Aesthetics and Art philosophy. Institute of Culture, Philosophy and Art, Vilnius, 2008.
- Gradinskaitė V. *Lost Lithuanian Jerusalem in the oeuvre of Rafael Chvoles*. In: Materials of the 15th International yearly Judaica conference, Moscow, 2008.
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Papers in international conferences:

Ilona Murauskaitė gave papers about „Junge Vilne“ writers in Daugavpils (Latvia, in Oct 2008) and Vilnius (Dec 2008), Vilna Gradinskaitė – papers about Jewish art in Vilnius (Dec 2008) and at the First Congress for Jewish Art in Poland (Kazimierz Dolny, Oct 2008), Kamilė Rupeikaitė – papers about the semantics of biblical musical instruments in the 10th World Congress for Music Signification (Vilnius, Oct 2008) and in Scientific Conference „Phenomenon of Beauty and its Horizons“ (Vilnius, June 2009).

Two employees of the museum – Dr. Vilma Gradinskaitė and Dr. Kamilė Rupeikaitė participated in the 15th World Congress of Jewish Studies which took place in Jerusalem, Hebrew University, on Aug 2-6, 2009, presenting papers:

Vilma Gradinskaite, The Destruction of the “Jerusalem of Lithuania” in Marc Chagall's Painting “The White Crucifixion” (1938)

Kamilė Rupeikaitė, Biblical Musical Instruments as Pictorial Symbols in Lithuanian Churches.



Lectures and other activities:

The director of the museum Markas Zingeris gave lectures on Jewish history and culture in Germany (Oct-Nov 2008), also participated in Book Fair in Goeteborg (Sweden), where he introduced the catalogue published by the museum „Vilna Ghetto posters“. The director also participated in Jerusalem book fair in winter of 2009.

Director deputy Rachel Kostanian gave eight hours lecture talks/tours to the Yiddish Institutes summer students.

Participation in TV and radio programs:

M. Zingeris and R. Kostanian gave about 20 interviews for Lithuanian and foreign press, among them – for „Jewish Press“ (2008.09.15), Swedish edition „Gottenberg Post“ (2008.10.02), television of Hungary (2008.11.20), etc.

The Tolerance Centre was also visited by a group of journalists from Israel (Oct 2008) and by culture workers from Kaliningrad (Otc 2008), etc.

Partipation in seminars:

A Workshop on European Archives with Jewish Collections. Organizer – Rothschild Foundation (UK), Vilnius, Sept 2008. Employees from Fonds department S. Satkūnaitė, I. Murauskaitė participated.

In Sept 2008, secretary for research Kamilė Rupeikaitė participated in the World Symposium for Music Archeology in Berlin Ethnological Museum.

Two employees of the museum Milda Jakulytė-Vasil and Ieva Šadzevičienė participated on August 20-21, 2009 in education seminar „Cultural collaboration in EU. The Search and development of ideas“. Organiser Cultural Contact Point, Lithuania

Lithuanian Museum Association 12th conference “Lithuanian studies in museums” April 28th, 2009 Milda Jakulytė-Vasil „Historical memory at the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum“

Two employees of the museum – Dr. Vilma Gradinskaitė and Dr. Kamilė Rupeikaitė participated in the 15th World Congress of Jewish Studies which took place in Jerusalem, Hebrew University, on Aug 2-6, 2009, presenting the papers:

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Kamilė Rupeikaitė, Biblical Musical Instruments as Pictorial Symbols in Lithuanian Churches.

Irina Černeckaitė

Certificate for successful participation and active contribution to the Training Course INTERCULTURAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION held in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia from 05-10 September 2009.

The main theme of the Training Course was to improve the skills and knowledge of youth workers and young leaders in issues related to intercultural dialogue with an emphasis on intercultural conflict resolution and the personal development of the participants.



The Holocaust Education Project, by Austrian Volunteer Gedenkdiener Adalbert Wagner

For more than 13 years Austrian Gedenkdiener (remembrance workers) have been working at the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum. Some of them have launched Holocaust Education Projects at Lithuanian schools. In this tradition Adalbert Wagner continued to travel to Secondary Schools and Gymnasiums to hold lectures and workshops about Holocaust, Anti-Semitism, Racism and Tolerance. Each lesson was individually accomplished, each visit was different. The working language was English.



Within the project he has visited five schools in Vilnius, Garliava, Seta, Panevezys and Siauliai. After his visits some of these schools organized excursions to Vilnius for visiting the museum. Additionally he participated at a teacher seminar, organized by the Anne Frank House and the Vilnius Yiddish Institute, dealing with new teaching material about Anti-Semitism and Holocaust, with a special focus on Lithuania. The contacts which built up at this seminar were later of high importance to visit the schools.



"By my work I do educate young Lithuanians to become responsible and tolerant Europeans in order to prevent xenophobia in our European society. The methods of group-work, open discussions, lectures, oral history and many others, allow me to help the students to get an understanding for the dimension of the Holocaust. Not just the Phrase "Never again" will stick to the student's mind, but also the will to act to prevent future genocides or crimes against ethnic minorities."

The project was financially supported by the Austrian Embassy to Lithuania, as travelling and workshop material were expensive. All in all, the Gedenkdiener was able to reach a large number of Lithuanian students all across the country. He experienced, that anti-Semitism and xenophobia are widespread among the young generation. Their work as Gedenkdiener is just a small part in the network of educators whose task it is, to expell xenophobia from the minds of the students.





Goodbye Berti!

Just a couple of days ago we parted with our last year volunteer from Gedenkdienst, Adalbert Wagner, or simply Berti, as he recommended himself at his first day arrival. With wet eyes we hugged and kissed each other. He was wonderful, he was the „groise gewins“ as our classic say.

He was in every kind of activity: guiding, learning Yiddish, teaching others, enthusiastically prepared a lecture on Tolerance and Holocaust. And went to quite a number of schools in Lithuania with great success, searched and researched Jewish history for the „Catastrophe“ guidebook, worked on the exhibition renovation and so on.



He did it willingly with great interest. We already miss him, this talented and very friendly young man. He managed a lot, our

Berti and was of indispensable assistance to all of us.

Thank you Berti, thanks to your teachers and parents „un zay gezunt“!

Staff of the „Green House“. Rachel Kostanian.



Statistics

Like in last years' newsletter we again present statistics on our visitors. These are based on register made by our staff at the Holocaust exhibition, at the branches of the museum in Ponar, at Pylimo 4 and Naugarduko 10/2- the Tolerance Center.

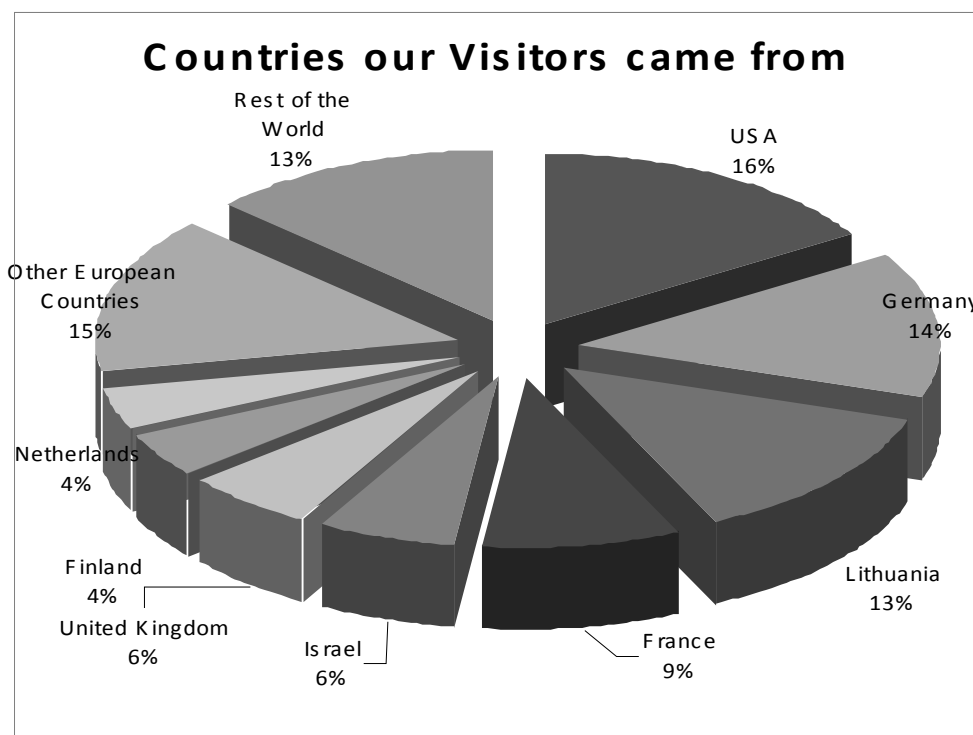
More than **20.471** people from more than 40 different countries visited the main branches of the museum. The Green House with the Holocaust exhibition was happy to welcome **3660** people according to the log book. The branch at Pylimo 4 saw **956** visitors. This decrease compared to last year can be explained by the renovation works that caused Pylimo 4 to close in summertime. The Tolerance Center reported **2.255** visitors. The mass killing site of Ponar (Paneriai) south of Vilnius reported **13.775** people this year.

The charts you see here, are only about the Green House, for we couldn't include other branches figures.

Compared to last year, the numbers of visitors from Germany and Lithuania increased, whereas the Lithuanians' numbers probably result from our effort of attracting more local schools.

Not only pupils, but also many Embassies as well as representatives from the US Congress were guided through the museum. In February we too had a big guided tour for disabled persons. We are proud of having had so many sincere entries into our visitors book Nr. 4, including also Martin Gilbert, the Ambassadors of Ireland, Austria, UK, USA and Netherlands.

Looking at the distribution of visitors by month, we actually can see the main concentration of visitors in summer, especially in August, followed by June and July.





FROM ABROAD

A letter from Martin Gilbert:

[...] impressed, as always, by the Green House and by your personal leadership of this important institution that succeeds, with such modest resources, to accurately recount the Holocaust in Lithuania while maintaining the genuine spirit of the Holocaust survivors who worked so closely with you to design, set up and maintain these exhibits.

The aura of warmth and authenticity, so closely linked to the survivors in Lithuania who enabled the development of the Green House in the first place, gives it a special spirit that is now well known internationally, and has become one of the most important addresses in Vilnius and a great credit to the city's status in Europe[...]

I very much hope that you will enjoy the resources, and the operational and conceptual independence, to continue your splendid work for many years to come.

A letter from Donal Denham, Ambassador of Ireland:

This letter of thanks is long overdue but I do want to record my great appreciation for the vital place which The Green House Museum occupies as witness to the Holocaust as it occurred here in Lithuania and to pay tribute to you personally for your tireless dedication and effort in keeping the collective memory alive for future generations.

[...]

I can only repeat my sincere thanks for what you have done and my hope that you will continue to be such an inspiration for many more years to come.



AMONG COMMENTS BY OUR VISITORS

April 5, 2009 This is a most important museum and educational resource that needs to be seen and studied by everyone who cares about the past - and about the future of humanity. Sir Martin Gilbert, Oxford, UK

May 13, 2009 A very impressive exhibition on tragic days of history, when a civilization was destroyed. What is left shows the richness of this culture. Annemieke Ruigrok, Netherland' Ambassador

July 17, 2009 Presenting the memory - keeping us aware. I hate being a Human being when I see what a human being can do - I love being a Human being for the strenght of thise who survived and those who saved them - never again . plus jamais - we are one, whoever we are! A group of French friends

May 21, 2009 Shocked and impressed, full of shame to see the crimes humans were able to do and other who did not stop them. In solidarity with the victims – NEVER AGAIN FACISM! Neubauer and Kampter, Steyer, Austria

May 14, 2009 A disgrace to our Grandparents – we always have to be reminded. And never must be a final stroke! That we are owing the victims of Vilne, Kovno and elsewhere. Karsten D., Berlin, Germany

May 5, 2009 I am born in Kaunas. After 37 years I came back to visit the places where my mother and I were born. Your Museum is amazing, tears in my eyes, Canada, Toronto

May 4, 2009 I always thought that I knew what happened in the Second World War to god's people, the Jews. But seeing only this museum for one hour I know now that I hardly knew anything until now. It impressed me very much. Pieter Prak, Mary Prak, Netherlands

April 30, 2009 What an important exhibition! A must for all people. A must for schoolchildren, for students from all parts of Lithuania, Russia, Belarus, Latvia - a must. This place should survive, do not let go - over 100.000 witnesses ask you to keep this place in Vilnius open, here at the Green House, open, alive. Rebecca and Shlomo Maayan, Israel

April 14, 2009 We must never forget, and therefore the exhibition in the "Green House" is so important. Thank you for a very painful, but very necessary visit. Gil Steiner, Ambassador of Norway





February 20, 2009 As often as one is dealing with the Holocaust, as less one can believe, that this horror existed. One sees the photographs and does not know where to go with the feelings of bewilderment, consternation, limitless commiseration and anger. Its important, to visit these exhibitions to be aware: these crimes were possible. Humans have the ability, to commit these crimes. And they still take place, if not in Europe then in Africa or elsewhere. Still today! Learn out of History. Annabelle, Berlin, Germany

February 3, 2009 Why does one not know this? Why has one not heard about the? So much, that one does not understand, even when being connected so intensive with the holocaust. This museum would have to be much bigger – to show the huge sorrow, violence and horror which took place here. Theresa, Vienna, Austria

November 15, 2008 I only wish more people would come to see this very impressive exhibition, that is tremendously moving. Thank you, The Havasiti Family, Vienna, Austria

November 10, 2008 One of the best Jewish Museum I have seen. Clare Fester, Australia

October 16, 2008 Frightened and regretting I had to see – so much misery that must never happen again – Pray! Netter, Krems, Austria

October 1, 2008 We would like to thank you very much for you so impressive and very important work! The museum is so important and allows an understanding of the Holocaust. Your exhibition will also carry on this understanding to the next generations. With appreciation and best wishes, Dr. Kathrin Meyer, Executive Secretary ITF

October 1, 2008 I am shaken by the modesty and smallness of the house that is commemoration the once great and proud Jewish Community of Lithuania/ Vilnius and their tragic fate. But we are deeply impressed what a few dedicated hands, hearts and minds can achieve. Deeply impressed and grateful with very very best wishes, Ferdinand Trautmannsdorf, Chairman ITF

October 1, 2008 Sholom aleikhem! One of my favourite places to visit in Vilnius - and one of the most important! L'chaim! And Shana Tova, Donal Denham, Ambassador of Ireland





FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS

We'd like to thank all our dear friends who have supported us so generously. Thanks to you we are able to continue our work.

In 2008-2009 (5770) the museum received many warm letters and gifts from supporters around the world. The following people and organizations donated books, compact discs, DVDs, magazines, academic journals, photographs and other materials, but the list is only a partial one so apologies to anyone left out, your support is much appreciated even if your name didn't make it onto this list.

Yad Vashem(ISR), Library of Congress(USA), Shivaun Woolfson(UK), Zydowski Instytut Historyczny(POL), Muriel Chochois(FR), Ambassador of Austria, Andrea Wickel, K. Shezlock(USA), Yehuda Wolfson(ISR), Werner Brockjan(GER), Adam Kempler, Oxford Journals, Oxford University Press, Yivo Institute, Carl Barzon, USHMM, London Jewish Cultural Centre (UK), Simon Malkes, Suzanne and Yves Plasseraud(FR), William S. Konecky, Christoph Jetter, K. Sherlock(USA), Mouller Jaime

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