

The Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum of Lithuania

Newsletter 3

October 1999

Dear Friends,
dear Colleagues,

We are happy to congratulate you with **Rosh Hashana** and wish you a very **Happy New Year**, though it is a little bit late, sorry indeed.

This time we have to apologize for not sending a full Newsletter in time. The reason is that we were all very busy by preparing an exhibition with authentic originals of the **Vilna Ghetto posters**, which miraculously survived the Holocaust - for traveling to the US in just 6 weeks. It was opened on the 22nd of September in the US Capitol in Washington, to commemorate the day of the Genocide of the Jews in Lithuania. We hope that you had received an invitation from the Lithuanian Embassy in the US and visited the exhibition (for those in the US). We wait for your response to it. A catalogue, posters and cards followed the exhibition.

It was a great success. Most distinguished US Congressmen visited the opening, among them Stuart Eizenstat, Sam Gejdenson, Edward Markey, Tom Lantos. It was a great and very moving event.

The museum is now working on a bigger catalogue on the posters and the exhibition.

The second major project of our museum is the exhibition „**Anne Frank - a History for Today**“. It was opened in the Lithuanian Parliament on the 23rd of September, the Memorial day of the Shoah in Lithuania. It awaited very many visitors and was of great success. After one week in the Lithuanian Parliament the exhibition was transferred to the Old Town Hall where it was opened to the public with a big cultural program. The exhibition is the centerpiece of a more extensive project, involving many institutions. Our main partner is the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam represented by Mag. Norbert Hinterleitner, who several times visited us to help with the work here. The museum's young volunteers from Austria, Wolfhardt Freinbichler and before him Johannes Thaler, toiled painstakingly a whole year to implement the project. The exhibition will now travel to 8 towns in Lithuania. In addition the drama „The Dreams of Anne Frank“ will be performed in these towns. The cast of the play are pupils from the Jewish School in Vilnius, named after Shalom Aleichem, and from the Lithuanian School Nr. 9, all aged 14 - 15 (the age of Anne Frank when she wrote her diary). A Teacher Training program on the topics Holocaust, democracy, minorities and Human Rights, different cultural events, guide trainings and a final youth-festival will complete this big project.

The third major event in our life is our first „ten years Anniversary“ in October! Who could believe this ten years ago ?

Marking our anniversary we hope to finish the exhibition „**Jews of Lithuania fighting the Nazis**“ (it stuck because of lack of finance).

Two exhibitions are to be opened quite soon:

The first one about the noted writer **Masha Rolnikaite**, born in Vilnius (we call her the „Anne Frank of Vilnius“, since she also wrote a diary while she lived in the Vilna Ghetto).

The second one „**Survivors of the Kovno Ghetto**“ (photo portraits, see picture on the right).

Furthermore three books are planned to be published by the end of this year:

- 1) About the *Rescuers of Lithuanian Jews* (2nd Vol.).
- 2) The *Šiauliai Ghetto: List of prisoners*.
- 3) *The Jews in the Lithuanian press* (a bibliography) of years 1985 - 1987.

And very pleasant news we kept for the end of this letter:

The Yiddish seminar in „*Yerushalyim de Lita*“ took place for the second time! We were privileged to listen to outstanding lecturers: Prof. Benjamin Harshav, Prof. Eli Katz and Prof. David Fishmann. After fifty years of silenced „Yiddishkeit“ - Yiddish sounds again in Vilnius.

We are here to keep this place alive...

„ES HERT ZICH UNZER TROT, MIR ZAINEN DO !“ (Hirsh Glik)

That is briefly our current report to you.

We also send you our new folder about the museum and hope you will confirm our Friendship as it is said in our application.

You are welcome to order our new catalogue of the Vilnius Ghetto posters, for which Friends of the Museum will get a discount of 10 %.

Please keep in touch.

With most sincere wishes

Museum Administration

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