

# NEWSLETTER

The International Commission activities,  
June–August, 2016



**The International Commission**  
for the Evaluation of the Crimes of  
the Nazi and Soviet Occupation  
Regimes in Lithuania

## **International seminar in Riga encouraged discussion on educational challenges and potentialities of the Holocaust education**



11–14 July an international seminar for Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian teachers who are involved in the Holocaust education, was held in Riga (Latvia). The opening of the seminar was organised at Zanis Lipke

Memorial. The opening was attended not only by the organisers of the seminar: Mémorial de la Shoah, France, the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, but also the ambassadors of Israel, France and Germany. One of the organisers Bruno Boyer in his speech emphasized that historical knowledge and education have to go together, and everybody has to learn from the history, despite the fact that these lessons not always are pleasant to us. Zanis Lipke Memorial was introduced to the audience; during WWII the Jews were rescued and hidden there.

The topic of the Holocaust in three Baltic countries was thoroughly analysed including the role of collaborators, the cause of Antisemitism, Jewish life and political activity before WWII; and the way the topic of the Holocaust is revealed in history textbooks. The participants of the seminar had a possibility of meeting some representatives of Jewish community and to get acquainted with the history of the building, the museum and educational activities. The teachers visited Rumbula massacre place, where about 25,000 Jews were killed during the Holocaust; and the place of the Great Choral Synagogue where around 400 Jews perished when the building was set ablaze (04/07/1941). In 2001, a Holocaust memorial was constructed on the ruins of burned down synagogue.

The international seminar was organised by Mémorial de la Shoah (France), the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem (Israel) in cooperation with the Secretariat of the International Commission (Lithuania) and Estonian, Latvian ministries of education.

## **One-day seminar – getting ready for a summer traineeship at the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem**

16 June a seminar was held in Vilnius for teachers and education workers to get ready for a summer traineeship at the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, Israel.

The participants were introduced with the Holocaust education programme implemented by the Secretariat of the International Commission. Communication with the witnesses of the Holocaust is one the branches of this programme. The seminar participants had an opportunity to meet Fania Brancovskaja, a former Vilnius Ghetto prisoner. Fania Brancovskaja guided an educational sightseeing tour throughout the territory of former Ghetto, introduced the history of pre-war Jewish community and different buildings related to its life. Fania Brancovskaja had also told her story of escape on the last day before the Ghetto liquidation. The destiny of Ghetto prisoners and human dilemmas faced by them were also discussed during the tour.

Some travel arrangements for the traineeship in Israel were made at the end of the seminar.





## Siauliai Jewish community history in the seminar “Recalling History of Our Country”



5 August 20 educators of different TECs joined the external seminar in Siauliai. The seminar aimed to introduce the history of famous industrialist Chaim Frenkel, to visit the places of former Siauliai Ghettos (“Caucasus” and “Trakai Lake”) to learn about the destiny of Siauliai Jewish community in WWII, and visit mass murder sites.

A group of teachers visited Chaim Frenkel Villa-Museum and were introduced to the production of well-known industrialist. The shoes made in this factory were famous not only in Siauliai, but also in Western Europe. After the museum tour a representative of Siauliai Jewish community Aleksandras Kerbelis guided the group to the places important to Siauliai Jewish community: former synagogue building, Chaim Frenkel monument, the place of old Jewish cemetery, which was desecrated during the Soviet occupation. Seminar participants were warmly met at Siauliai Jewish community. Together with community members the teachers visited two mass murder sites: Gubernija forest, where more than 1000 Jewish men, women and children were killed, and Kuziai forest, where more than 8000 Jewish people were shot to death.

The external seminar was organised by the Secretariat of International Commission.

## TEC teachers in a jamboree of Lithuanian political prisoners and deportees and freedom fighters

The first August weekend in Ariogala, in the Dubysa valley every year traditionally is organised a jamboree of Lithuanian political prisoners and deportees “With Lithuania in the Heart”. This year the 26<sup>th</sup> jamboree gathered more than 3000 people, among them a group of TEC teachers, who attended the jamboree the second time.

The event is dedicated to commemorate the losses during the Soviet occupations, recall and pay tribute to those who perished and suffered for the freedom of Lithuania. This year the teachers from Alytus, Balbieriskis, Kalvarija and Ariogala TECs took part in the event. They felt delighted seeing young people actively involved in the event.

TEC teachers were invited to join the event by the Secretariat of International Commission and Ariogala Gymnasium TEC.





## Teacher Traineeship in the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, Israel



17-28 August in the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem 25 teachers and education workers from Lithuania attended ten-day international seminar. The attendees listened to the lectures on the life of Jewish communities before WWII and mass exterminations in Lithuania and Europe. The classes for Lithuanian educators were organised in Yad Vashem museum, archives, reflection and discussion centre. The group was introduced to the publications and methodologi-

cal material published by Yad Vashem and possibilities to attend virtual teaching courses. The seminar participants met the Holocaust survivor from Lithuania Yitzhak Arad who told the teachers not only his survival story, but also about his arrival to historical Motherland, fighting for the independence of Israel, and his long lasting service as the Chairman of the Directorate of Yad Vashem.

The Minister Counsellor of Embassy of Lithuania, Ramūnas Davidonis met with the group of trainees. The educators learned about the mission of Lithuanian embassy in Israel, its communication and cooperation with abundant Litvak community, history evaluation and economical and political collaboration between Israel and Lithuania.

The trainees brought from the seminar not only some new knowledge, recommendations and advice for teaching the topic of the Holocaust, but also a deeper understanding of the state of Israel, its inhabitants, culture and cherished historical memory.



**A new TEC (116-th) was established in Balbieriskis Culture and Leisure Centre,  
Prienai district.**

