

NEWSLETTER



The International Commission

for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania

January–March
2016

January

Commemoration of the Freedom Defenders Day

Civic incentive “**The Memory is Alive because it Proclaims**” initiated by the International Commission was joined by **1285** different institutions. In the morning of the 13th of January the candles symbolising life, light, justice, memory and unity were lit up in the windows of the institutions. The incentive is meant to pay tribute to those who lost their lives for freedom.



International seminar for teachers in Vilnius held on the eve of the commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day



20-22 January, an international seminar for teachers took place in the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum. 44 teachers from all over Lithuania interested in the Holocaust education, attended the seminar.

The seminar “The Holocaust, collaboration and mass extermination in Lithuania” was conducted in Lithuanian, English and French. The lectures were by the lecturers from Estonia, France, Germany, Lithuania and the USA. At the beginning of the seminar the speeches were given by the French Ambassador Philippe Jeantaud, the representative of French organisation Memorial de la Shoah Bruno Boyer, the Director of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum Markas Zingeris, the Ambassador at large at the Lithuanian MFA Dainius

Junevicius, a representative of the Ministry of Education and Science Rimantas Jokimaitis. The executive director of the International Commission addressed to the audience: “Today teachers are responsible for the knowledge given to the young generation and the historical perception instilled into their students.” During a very intense three-day programme the teachers were given lectures, which evolved questions and the need of answers; some thematical educational programmes were also present at the museum expositions.

The seminar was co-organised by the Memorial de la Shoah (France), the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum and the Secretariat of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania.



A helping hand given is a small miracle

The topic of a helping hand given by the rescuers during the Holocaust in Lithuania and the miracle of rescuing a person was prevailing on the 27th of January – the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Ariogala Gymnasium at the traditional conference for the communities of TECs. A conference was named “The Rescue of Another is the Highest Human Virtue”. 150 representatives of 26 institutions and a group of honourable guests attended the conference. At the beginning of the conference the Ambassador of the State of Israel Amir Maimon expressed his delight at the possibility to visit Ariogala and introduced the audience with the history of Ariogala Jewish community before WWII. The Mayor of Raseiniai District Municipality Algirdas Gričius recalled some moments of his family history, some stories about their neighbours Jews, told by his grandmother, and encouraged students to take a close look at their own history and warned never to raise a hand against another person.

The students introduced their projects and creative works implemented by their communities, gave some presentations on the rescuers, their families and their destiny. Majority of presentations depicted their local history. Despite the fact that all 21 presentations were different, but they had the same topic – the rescue of another, which sometimes might be unsuccessful both for the rescuer and the person intended to be rescued.

The conference on the 27th of January – the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Ariogala Gymnasium is a traditional annual event organised for the 6-th time in a row. It is organised by the Secretariat of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania together with Ariogala Gymnasium Tolerance Education Centre.



February

The final event of the national educational project “Who was Chiune Sugihara?”





In September 2015 the Secretariat of the International Commission initiated a national project targeted to the communities of schools with active Tolerance Education Centres (hereafter TEC) “Who was Chiune Sugihara?”

The project gained its momentum at the commemoration of the 75-th anniversary of the events, when in 1940 the Japanese consul Chiune Sugihara issued transit visas for people, mainly Jewish refugees from Poland, who were trying to escape the Second World War in Europe. The project aimed to encourage students to get interested in the works done by the consul Chiune Sugihara and his cooperation with the other diplomats

12 Lithuanian schools from different regions of Lithuania with active TECs had implemented the project “Who was Chiune Sugihara?” (October 2015-January 2016). The students made research on the personality, life, works, and the people, who Chiune Sugihara was surrounded by. Different cross-curricular activities were organised, Sugihara House (museum) in Kaunas was visited. The results of project activities were summarised in the different presentations, such as artistic compositions, presentations, role plays, video films and art work exhibitions. A vast majority of schools introduced their project results to their school and local communities in December and January. The representatives of the International Commission and Japanese Embassy attended these events as well.

On the 11th of February Vytautas Magnus University hosted the final event of the national project “Who was Chiune Sugihara?” Nobuki Sugihara, a son of a former consul Chiune Sugihara and some of his relatives visited the final event of the project.

The event was also attended by a great number of guests: Japanese Ambassador to Lithuania, Toyoei Shigeeda, the First Secretary of Israeli Embassy Yehuda Gidron, Polish Embassy representatives, members of Panevezys and Kaunas Jewish communities, Vytautas Magnus University community members and Kaunas city community members.



Yad Vashem, The International School for Holocaust Studies in Israel honoured Lithuanian teachers who took part in the project “Each person has a name”



In 2013-2014 the Secretariat of the International Commission implemented a project “Each person has a name”. 23 schools joined the project and were collecting information on the Jews who lived in different localities of Lithuania before WWII. On the basis of the collected material 163 surveys were completed on the Jews who perished or survived the Holocaust. Those surveys were sent to Yad Vashem. The International School for Holocaust Studies in Israel prepared letters of acknowledgement to the teachers whose material was the most informative and precise.

On the 11th of February at the final event of the national project “Who was Chiune Sugihara?” the teachers were honoured by awarding them with the letters of acknowledgement, which were handed by the representative of the Secretariat of the International Commission and the First Secretary of Israeli Embassy Yehuda Gidron.



March

Civic incentive “Life Blossom of the Nation”

The International Commission for the third year in a row encouraged educational institutions to join the civic incentive “Life Blossom of the Nation” and mark the Day of Restoration of Independence of Lithuania (11 March).



Meeting of the International Commission



16-19 March the meeting of a sub commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi regime in Lithuania was held. The meeting was attended by: Emanuelis Zingeris, Chairman of the International Commission, Dr. Saulius Sužiedėlis, the chairman of the sub commission, and the members of the International Commission: Andrew Baker, Dr. Arūnas Bubnys, Dr. Christoph Dieckmann, Dr. habil. Jürgen Matthäus, Prof. Dr. Dina Porat, Dr. habil. Joachim Tauber, Dr. Arkadi Zeltser. According to the evaluation of the meeting given by Emanuelis Zingeris, Chairman of the International Commission, Dr. Saulius Sužiedėlis, the chairman of the sub commission the meeting was very efficient and productive, the friendly and benevolent working atmosphere prevailed.



Meeting with the students of Pabrade Gymnasium for a discussion on the topic of the Holocaust

On the 14th of March Svencionys District "Zeimenos" Gymnasium in Pabrade hosted a lecture-discussion "The Holocaust in Europe and Lithuania: the murders of Lithuanian Jewry and their motives"

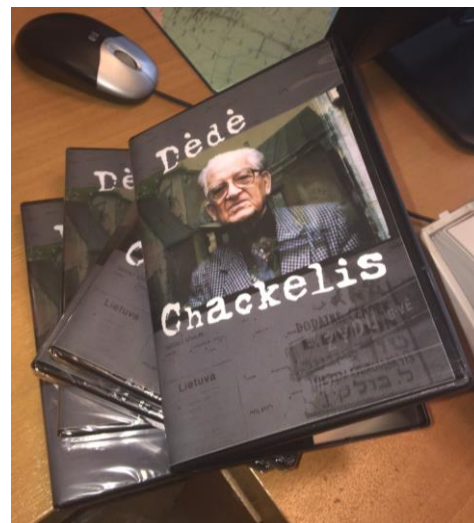
The coordinator of educational programmes at the Secretariat of the International Commission Ingrida Vilkiene talked to the students about the beginning of the Holocaust, analysed "The Nuremberg Laws" which deprived German Jews of their rights of citizenship, and eventually outlawed the Jews completely, depriving them of their rights as human beings. The students got acquainted with the history of the Holocaust in Lithuania and in Švenčionys region – their native place. The students were introduced the personal stories of Ytzhak Arad and Fania Brancovskaja who managed to escape the Vilnius Ghetto and survive. The students listened to the recorded interview given by the perpetrator, who took part in the killings in Lithuania. The interview is kept at the Washington Holocaust Museum.



Film "Uncle Chatzkel" introduction to the TEC communities at Vilnius Jewish Public Library

A film director Rod Freeman a half a year ago visited Lithuania and met the Executive Director of the International Commission Ronaldas Racinskas and had a discussion on the ways of using the film "Uncle Chatzkel" for educational purposes. The film explores the history of

Europe's Lithuanian Jewish community and tells the life story of Chatzkel Lemchen who was one of Lithuania's eminent intellectuals and scientists, a lexicographer of international reputation, a translator and a teacher. He and his family were prisoners of the Nazis in the Kovno Ghetto. His two sons were taken from the Ghetto and murdered. A film author, his nephew Rod Freedman, lives in Australia. The Secretariat of the International Commission on the basis of the agreement with the film director, made 400 copies of the film. The film will be introduced to the





TECs together with the methodological recommendations for educators. The copies will be distributed during the film presentations.

In the middle of March Vilnius Jewish Public Library hosted the presentation of the film “Uncle Chatzkel”.

Film review was attended by students of two schools with active TECs. After watching the film, some discussions took place, the copies of the film were given to the teachers. The event was co-organised by the Secretariat of the International Commission and Vilnius Jewish Public Library.

The news from Tolerance Education Centres

5 new TECs established:

Kedainiai Juozas Paukstelis Progymnasium

Klaipeda “Aitvaras” Gymnasium

Marijampole Youth School

Kupiskis Povilas Matulionis Progymnasium

Kedainiai “Atzalynas” Gymnasium

Open Lesson at Kupiskis Povilas Matulionis Progymnasium

On the 21st of January, 2016 Public relation specialist of Israeli Embassy in Lithuania Lina Jagniatinskytė visited Kupiskis Povilas Matulionis Progymnasium and met with the students of 7–8 grades. She introduced an interesting and rich history of the State of Israel, its culture and modern science achievements. The students were surprised at some facts: they had compared the area of both countries (Israel and Lithuania) and understood that Lithuania is 3 times larger, but has much fewer inhabitants. The fact that Hebrew language was revived thanks to a Jew of Litvak origin Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was also great news for the students.



Japanese Ambassador to Lithuania visits Varena “Azuolas” Gymnasium

5 February Japanese Ambassador to Lithuania, Toyoei Shigeeda and Varena district mayor Algis Kaseta attended the open cross-curricular lesson “Close Lithuania and distant Japan.” The lesson is a part of the project for the commemoration of the Japanese consul Chiune Sugihara, initiated by the International Commission. The guests were introduced with the school community activities related to the history of Lithuania and Japan, and artistic composition “What is the World Held on?”



Educational lesson “The Greyness of Soviet Routine” at Kupiskis Povilas Matulionis Progymnasium

10 March the employees of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania had an educational lesson for 5-8 grade students “The Greyness of Soviet Routine”. The guests told the students about the life during the soviet period and presented some documentaries of that period.



Kalvarija Gymnasium TEC held a methodological meeting for the teachers of History of Kalvarija municipality

25 February Kalvarija Gymnasium TEC held a methodological meeting for the teachers of History of Kalvarija municipality “Problem based teaching of the topic of totalitarian regimes and cross-curricular integration in the context of History lessons”. The educational materials and information gained at Yad Vashem traineeship seminar “How to teach the Holocaust?” were introduced.

“Pestinukai – the end of Krakes, Grinkiskis, Baisogala, Guziunai, Surviliskis, Dotnuva Jewish culture” – project activities in Krakes gymnasium

Krakes Mikalojus Katkus Gymnasium of Kedainiai Region this year is going to mark the tragic event when 75 years ago, 2 September, 1941 in a village of Pestinukai (next to Krakes) 1125 Jews were shot to death. Together with the tragic destiny of the Jews local trade, Jewish culture and customs passed away. Krakes Mikalojus Katkus Gymnasium of Kedainiai Region has already started some project activities and aims to introduce the community with the cultural history customs and traditions of the Jews of Kedainiai region and Krakes as well.

