

NoSimpleStories

FRIDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2011

Coverage

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It should be noted, however, that the workshop was sponsored by the Institute of Jewish Studies at UCL,

with gratefully acknowledged support by the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in the United Kingdom.

Posted by [François Guesnet](#) at 14:50 0 comments

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TUESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2011

No Simple Stories: Jewish-Lithuanian relations between coexistence and violence

Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London

Sunday February 6th (3pm-6.30pm) - Garden Room, UCL, London WC1E 6BT

Monday February 7th (10am-4pm) - The Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB

This one- and a half-day colloquium brings together experts from many important fields - Jewish history in eastern Europe, Lithuanian history, the history of World War Two and the Holocaust. The colloquium will also hear from specialists in interethnic violence theory, in order to understand the discrepancy between long centuries of peaceful coexistence between Jews and Lithuanians and the short period of extreme violence during World War Two. We will be discussing various scholarly explanations given for this violence. This investigation will combine an assessment of long-term features of Lithuanian-Jewish coexistence between the late 18th and early 20th centuries with an appraisal of political developments after the establishment of Lithuania as independent state.

The colloquium combines three perspectives: theory of interethnic violence, historical appraisal of the traditions of Jewish-Lithuanian coexistence and the history of occupied Lithuania, 1940-1945. It aims to reconstruct the process of changing Lithuanian-Jewish relations in different historical eras and thereby to dissect the complex issues which took place between the two groups.

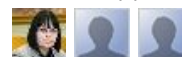
Amongst the questions raised will be:

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- What legal, political, socio-cultural and economical mechanisms regulated the relations between the two ethnic groups?
- To what extent did tolerance, ignorance and recognition play themselves out in Jewish– Lithuanian relations?
- How did mutual stereotypes and myths form? What were the dynamics of their spread and the ways they were overcome?
- What was the degree of anti-Jewish violence, what determined it and who implemented it? What was the reaction of Lithuanian society to this violence?
- What were the relationships between Lithuanian society and Jews living in it? How did they differ or were they similar to those of other societies in Central and Eastern Europe?

On the widely-researched topic of Lithuanian–Jewish relations in the context of the Holocaust in Lithuania, the organizers of the conference also propose to raise the following questions:

- *How were the relations of these two groups affected by the Soviet occupation of 1940?
- *What role was indicated for local inhabitants in the national socialists' plans to kill Jews?
- *Which social and regional groups did the Lithuanians who participated in mass killings of the Jews belong to?
- *What was the social portrait of those Lithuanians who saved Jews?

By addressing such issues of fundamental significance for the understanding of Jewish-Lithuanian coexistence in all its complexity, the IJS and the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies have closely cooperated with the Lithuanian Institute of History. The colloquium will offer a unique opportunity to contextualize questions which are both extremely sensitive and highly important. By organizing such an event, the IJS responds to high expectations from the general public to address this topic.

Posted by [François Guesnet](#) at 08:33 0 comments

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Conference Programme

Sunday, February 6, 2011

Venue: Garden Room, Wilkins Building, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT

3 pm - 3.20 pm: Greetings and Introduction

Prof. Mark Geller: Greetings

Dr François Guesnet, Dr Darius Staliūnas: *Rationale of the Workshop; Recent Lithuanian Scholarship about Jewish-Lithuanian relations*

Chair: Darius Staliūnas

3.20 pm - 5.40 pm: Panel One**From Empire to Nation**

Chair: François Guesnet

Heinz-Dietrich Löwe (Heidelberg University): *The study of pogroms: history, narratives, comparisons*

Klaus Richter (Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Technische Universität Berlin): *Lithuanians and Jews. National awakening and economic policies before the first World War*

4.15 pm - 4.35 pm Coffee break

Darius Staliūnas (Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius): *Lithuania during the revolution of 1905: a region without ethnic violence?*

Motti Zalkin (Ben-Gurion University): *Sharunas, prince of Dainava in a Hebrew gown: The encounter of local Jews with Lithuanian culture in interwar Lithuania*

5.40 pm - 6.30 pm Discussion

Monday, February 7, 2011

Venue: Seminar Room, The Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB

10.15 am - 12 noon: Panel Two**Autonomy and Minority Rights in the Interwar Period**

Chair: Darius Staliūnas

Antony Polonsky (Brandeis University): *Statehood and minority protection between the World Wars: Lithuania in the Central Eastern European context*

Šarūnas Liekis (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas): *The scope of Jewish autonomy in independent Lithuania*

Vladas Sirutavičius (Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius): *Antisemitism in interwar Lithuania*

1 pm - 3 pm: Panel Three**War, Occupation, Holocaust**

Chair: Antony Polonsky

Werner Bergmann (Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Technische Universität Berlin): *Anti-Jewish Violence in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Europe: Some Theoretical Considerations*

Joachim Tauber (Institut für Geschichte und Kultur der Deutschen in Nordost

europa, University of Hamburg): *Hitler, Stalin, and Antisemitism in Lithuania, 1939-1941*

Christoph Dieckmann (Keele University): *Lithuanian cooperation with the German Occupier. Structures, Processes, Effects, 1941-44*

Saulius Suziedelis (Professor Emeritus of History, Millersville University of Pennsylvania): *Memories of blood: examining Lithuanian responses to the Holocaust*

3 pm - 3.20 pm: Coffee break

3.20 pm - 4 pm: Concluding discussion

Chair: François Guesnet, Darius Staliūnas

The Institute of Jewish Studies gratefully acknowledges the generous support for this event, including support from the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in the UK and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania

Posted by [François Guesnet](#) at 08:31 0 comments

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TUESDAY, 4 JANUARY 2011

ASSOCIATED EVENTS

NO SIMPLE STORIES

Jewish-Lithuanian relationships: facing difficult questions

February 6-10, 2011

It is obvious that the history of the coexistence of the Lithuanians and the Jews is far from simple but the frequent desire to simplify it is also clear. One standpoint shows Lithuanian-Jewish relations as an ever-growing conflict – from the very beginnings of the Jewish community in Lithuania in the 14th c. up to World War II and the Holocaust, where according to the memories of the post-war Jewish Diaspora, Jews were killed not so much by the German Nazis as by their neighbours the Lithuanians. The opposing viewpoint focuses on the long-term peaceful coexistence of two ethnoreligious groups with the blame for the Holocaust in Lithuania being laid at the door of German racist politics.

The popularity of simplified historical interpretations has in large part been due to different approaches adopted in historiography. Soviet historians had to write the histories of social classes but not of ethnic and religious groups, and the euphemism “the killing of Soviet citizens” was a way to minimise the enormous number of Jews singled out for brutal murder during the Holocaust. Serious academic research in Lithuania on Jewish history has only been developed over the last twenty years and today the situation has changed. This has been witnessed by the quite intensive collaboration between historians from Lithuania and Israel as well as other countries, studying the history of Jews in Lithuania, and by the number of books and articles published.

At the international colloquium *No Simple Stories: Jewish-Lithuanian relationships between coexistence and violence*, which will take place 6-7 February 2011 at University College London, historians will discuss the topic of Jewish-Lithuanian relations in the context of the Holocaust in Lithuania, as well as long term features of Lithuanian-Jewish coexistence between the late 18th and the 20th centuries. The colloquium will offer a unique opportunity to contextualise difficult questions, which are both sensitive and important.

The workshop will be accompanied by a programme of cultural events: the exhibitions *The Synagogues of Lithuania* and *The Sounds of Silence*, as well as the film screenings of *I Leave My Child to You* (Lithuania, 1999), and *The World was Ours: The Jewish Legacy of Vilna* (US, 2006).

The Vilner Klezmerim will be reviving the klezmer music of Lithuanian and Vilnius Jews and presenting a contemporary take on this expressive music. Following the screening of the film *Yitgadal V'yitkadash: Memorial Statues in the Strashun Forest* (Israel, 2005), there will be an open discussion with the workshop participants on the theme of *Why is it still difficult to speak about the Holocaust in Lithuania?*

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

EXHIBITION

6 February, Sunday, 5.30 pm, West London Synagogue

Goldsmid Hall, 34 Upper Berkeley Street, W1H 5AU

SYNAGOGUES IN LITHUANIA

Opening of the exhibition

Launch of the book *Synagogues in Lithuania A-M*

The exhibition presents Jewish houses of worship and their architecture, bringing into focus the uniqueness of wooden synagogues. It is a vanishing heritage with the distinct artistic aspects of architecture and philosophy gradually disappearing. The organizers of the exhibition have for the first time documented 92 synagogues in 59 Lithuanian cities and towns.

During World War II the Jewish communities that had built the synagogues and lived in their vicinity were wiped out. Because of the brutal attempts during the war years and Soviet times "to adapt" these buildings that had lost their congregants without any regard to preserving their heritage, the distinctive characteristics of the architecture and the interiors of the synagogues were lost and the synagogue courtyard spaces (shulhoef in Yiddish) became unrecognisable.

Free entrance

Exhibition continues until 22 February, 2011

CONCERT

6 February, Sunday, 7.00 pm, West London Synagogue

34 Upper Berkeley Street, London W1H 5AU

VILNER KLEZMERIM

Liora Grodnikaitė (voice)

Petras Vyšniauskas (reeds)

Raimondas Sviackevičius (accordion)

Boriss Kirzneris (violin)

Arkadijus Gotesmanas (percussion)

Klezmer music is an integral part of the tradition of East European Jewish music. No wedding or any other family or local celebration could do without klezmer music full of joy and fiery emotion mostly meant to be danced to. The aim of the Vilner Klezmerim is to revive the klezmer music of Lithuanian and the Vilnius Jews, to preserve the tradition and to give it a contemporary form. Taking part in this evening's programme are some of Lithuania's best jazz musicians and the well-known mezzo-soprano Liora Grodnikaitė.

Tickets: £15 (students £10)

EXHIBITION

7 February – 29 April, Mon-Fri 10 am – 5pm

Lithuanian Embassy in London

84 Gloucester Place, London W1U 6AU

5 May – 17 June, Mon-Fri 10 am – 5pm

Spiro Ark, Jewish Culture and Education Centre

25-26 Enford Street, London W1H 1DW

THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE

Traces of Jewish life in Lithuania

Exhibition of photographs by Raimondas Paknys

The exhibition is dedicated to the annihilated Jewish communities of Lithuania. The photographs capture the images of the cemeteries, prayer houses, and other buildings and sites, portraying the remnants of the Jewish golden age in Lithuania. Apart from a number of telling figures from the history of Lithuania's Jews, the viewers will learn about the Yiddish and Lithuanian names of towns and villages where the Jewish inhabitants used to make up a large proportion, perhaps even the majority of the overall population, in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Free entrance

FILM + DISCUSSION

8 February, Tuesday 7.30 pm, West London Synagogue

Samson Family Concourse, 33 Seymour Place, London W1H 5AU

YITGADAL V'YITKADASH: MEMORIAL STATUES IN THE STRASHUN FOREST

Film screening followed by the discussion *Why is it still difficult to speak about the Holocaust in Lithuania?*

Participants:

Prof Antony Polonsky

Prof Šarūnas Liekis

Prof Saulius Sužiedėlis

Prof Motti Zalkin

Dr Christoph Dieckmann

Dr Darius Staliūnas

In 1992, a Lithuanian mayor and a woodcarver born after the Holocaust, both non-Jewish, erected three memorial wooden statues near the site where 2,200 Jews were murdered, many being buried while still half-alive by the Nazis and their local collaborators in August 1941. In the winter of 2004, the statues were burned down. The perpetrators of the crime have yet to be discovered by the Lithuanian police. The film is the last evidence of the memorial.

Israel, 2005. Directed by: Dov Shinar, Motti Zalkin. Duration: 12'. Language: English

Tickets: £8 (students £5)

FILM + Q&A

9 February, Wednesday, 7.30 pm, West London Synagogue

Multimedia Room, 33 Seymour Place, London W1H 5AU

I LEAVE MY CHILD TO YOU

During World War II Pranas Laucevičius hid the Jewish girl Rūta Gurvičiūtė in his house in Telšiai. They soon fell in love and their son Telesforas was born. After a long period of hiding, the couple were reported to the Gestapo and both were shot dead just days before the end of the German occupation. Telesforas was raised by Pranas's sister Jadvyga, who lived to an old age in her native town Telšiai.

This 'not simple story' is told by Jakov Gurvich, brother of Rūta Gurvičiūtė, who came from Israel to Lithuania in June 2005, visited the places and people of his childhood, and shared his memories with them.

Lithuania, 2005. Created by Lilija Kopač, Dana Selčinskaja, Algis Liutkevičius, Virginijus Kubilius, Anatolijus Teliušinas. Duration: 60'. Language: English

Q&A with the consultant of the film Dr Irena Veisaitė, former chair of the Open Society Fund–Lithuania Board and a member of the OSI-Budapest Board.

Tickets: £8 (students £5)

FILM

9 February, Wednesday, 7 pm, Jewish Museum

129-131 Albert Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7NB

10 February, Thursday, 7.30 pm, West London Synagogue

Multimedia Room, 33 Seymour Place, London W1H 5AU

THE WORLD WAS OURS

The Jewish Legacy of Vilna

The World was Ours is a documentary film dedicated to the memory of Jewish Vilnius. Vilnius, often referred to as “The Jerusalem of Lithuania”, was one of the great cultural centres of East European Jewry. The film focuses on the pre-war life of this vibrant culture, producing illustrious figures such as Chaim Soutine, Jaques Lipschitz, Jascha Heifetz, Avram Sutzkever, Chaim Grade, and Joseph Buloff, to name just a few, as well as the Vilna Theatre. The film weaves together interviews, diaries, letters, poems, archival photographs and footage. Archival music and specially recorded performances evoke the spirit of the times.

US, 2006. Producer / Director: Mira Jedwabnik van Doren. Producer: Adam van Doren. Duration: 60'. Language: English

Tickets (Jewish Museum): £10 including free admission to the galleries

Tickets (West London Synagogue): £8 (students £5)

Book tickets in advance through: <http://www.spiroark.org/>

Combined ticket offer for all the events (concert + 3 film screenings) at the West London Synagogue - £25 (students £20)

Organizers: Lithuanian Embassy in London, Spiro Ark and West London Synagogue

Partners:

The Centre for the Study of the Culture and History of East European Jews, Vilnius
www.jewishstudies.lt

The Vilnius Academy of Arts: www.vda.lt

The Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania: www.heritage.lt

The Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum: www.jmuseum.lt

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania: www.urm.lt

The Vilna Project, Inc.: www.thevilnaproject.org

Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania

For any further information please contact Lithuanian Embassy in the UK

www.lithuanianembassy.co.uk

Cultural attaché Daiva Parulskienė, 020 7935 9872, culture@lithuanianembassy.co.uk

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