

Newspaper of the Jewish community in Lithuania

# JERUSALEM

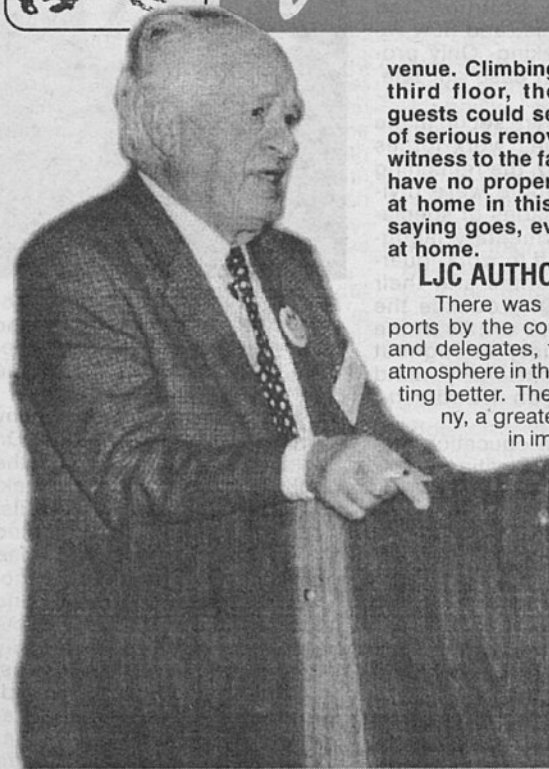


## of Lithuania

## CONGRATULATIONS DEAR VETERANS ON VICTORY DAY!

Greetings from the Lithuanian Jewish Community and the War Veterans' Council on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of the victory against fascism and nazism. We wish you good health and a long life. Eternal glory to the heroes who died in the fight for freedom!

# may 9



venue. Climbing the stairs to the third floor, the delegates and guests could see the beginnings of serious renovations, which are witness to the fact that though we have no property rights, we feel at home in this building. As the saying goes, even the walls help at home.

### LJC AUTHORITY GROWS

There was a feeling, from reports by the community chairman and delegates, that in general the atmosphere in the community is getting better. There is more harmony, a greater common interest in improving the work of

LJC relations with the Israeli Embassy to the Baltic Countries have strengthened as well.

### THREE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

The most important events in the life of the LJC over the past two years have been the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the death of the Vilnius Gaon, the 50th anniversary of the State of Israel, and the 10th anniversary of the re-birth of the Lithuanian Jewish Community.

Preparations for each of these celebrated dates encompassed an entire mosaic of events - lectures,

sible to restore the pre-war Jewish community, but everything must be done to enable the Lithuanian Jewish community to carry on an active and creative life. This is vital not only for your community, but for the State of Lithuania as well: the Jewish cultural tradition, your community's history - including its tragic experiences - are truly important moments in the creation of an open and civic Lithuanian society."

S.Alperavičius emphasized that Lithuania's Jews have two homelands: the historical one of Israel, and the one wherein we live - Lithuania. The existence of the State of Israel is a fact of great moral signifi-

sociation of Jewish Physicians, which supports the "Ezra" medical centre, has conducted its summary report - election meeting. One of the most active community organizations is the Union of Second World War Veterans. The Jewish Cultural Club continues to work successfully. Its organized events are very important in developing relations between national cultures, and in propagating the spiritual values of a Jewish culture. Last year saw the founding of a senior citizens' club, which is becoming increasingly more popular.

The "Fajerlech" ensemble recently took part in a Jewish child-

# THE FIFTH AND LAST LITHUANIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY CONFERENCE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The Fifth Conference of the Lithuanian Jewish Community (LJC) took place on April 25, 1999. On the surface it was no different from any of the others: a report by Simonas Alperavičius on the work of the community council and executive, statements from delegates, the passing of resolutions, election of chairperson and council. All the same, there was something out of the ordinary in the air.

First of all, because, in the words of S.Alperavičius, this conference would be the last one of the 20th century. The next will happen in the 21st century, in the third millennium. It seems that nature's gift - lovely spring weather - had a role to play as well, joked Joseph Shapiro during the discussions.

For the first time, the Community Conference was held in the Community Signatory Hall at Pylimo St. 4, instead of in a rented

the LJC, more concern for the situation both in the center as well as in the regions. Attitudes regarding the future of the community have become more uniform.

Community contact with state heads, officials, and public figures has become more solid. The LJC has presented them with questions essential for the life of our community: restitution of Jewish property, maintenance of Jewish cemeteries and the burial sites of Holocaust victims, the work of the Sholem Aleikhem School, and the Paneriai Memorial.

A growing number of foreign officials and delegations have been expressing an interest in the activities of the Lithuanian Jewish Community. S.Alperavičius noted meetings by members of the LJC with Chairman of the Israeli Knesset Dan Tichon, chief rabbi of Israel Meyer Lau, U.S. Assistant State Secretary S.Eisenstad, the JOINT delegation and its president D.Kolker, and others.

meetings with famous composers and musicians, film screenings, Jewish music festivals, scientific conferences and seminars, concerts by world famous performers, etc. - and included all of the LJC organizations.

A conference was organized in honour of the Vilnius Gaon; material from the conference has been published in English, and will soon be available in Lithuanian. A monograph by S.Atamukas, entitled "The Way of Lithuania's Jews", was published on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the LJC; it sheds light on life in Lithuania from the 14th century to the present day. A brochure has been published in Lithuanian and English, describing the life of Lithuania's Jews. And two films on the community are nearing completion.

These important events have consolidated the authority of the Lithuanian Jewish Community both in and outside the country. President V.Adamkus has said: "It is impos-

able to restore the pre-war Jewish community, but everything must be done to enable the Lithuanian Jewish community to carry on an active and creative life. This is vital not only for your community, but for the State of Lithuania as well: the Jewish cultural tradition, your community's history - including its tragic experiences - are truly important moments in the creation of an open and civic Lithuanian society."

### THE LJC AND ITS ORGANIZATIONS

The summary report noted that the LJC is founded on the activities of the communities in Kaunas, Šiauliai, Klaipėda and other cities, and on all of the Jewish organizations and associations included within the LJC. The Šiauliai Jewish community, the "Makabee" club, and the Judaica Dept. of the National M.Mažvydas Library marked their 10th anniversary. This will also be the 10th year since the founding of the Jewish State Museum, the lecture series, the Sholem Aleikhem Secondary School, and "Jerusalem of Lithuania" newspaper.

At the present time there is increasing activity on the part of the Union of Former Ghetto and Concentration Camp Prisoners. The As-

son's and youth festival in Moscow, where it won a 1st place certificate. The "Simcha" school ensemble continues to be active, and the "Jerusalem of Lithuania" professional music group maintains its good reputation.

### YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS

The "Ilan" children's club has been functioning for 8 years, and organizes annual winter camps. Last year more than 30 people attended a summer camp in Hungary.

The club needs to strengthen its contact with the school, to have more input from parents, to invite Jewish scholars, musicians, and museum workers to its meetings. The Sholem Aleikhem Jewish School, which has acquired secondary school status, offers both knowledge and guidance to its pupils.

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Photo: Chairman of the Lithuanian Jewish Community, S.Alperavičius

## CONGRATULATIONS - MAZL TOV!

# THE MAN AND THE SCHOLAR

Chackel Lemchen is truly a unique phenomenon of our life. Age, of course, is not the important factor. But preparing a two volume Russian-Lithuanian dictionary (a work requiring monumental intellectual concentration and an accurate memory) at the age of 92-93, is undoubtedly a heroic feat.

Ch.Lemchen is a unique individual also for the fact that as a Jew, he became one of the most eminent Lithuanian lexicographers. He is known as such not only throughout Lithuania, but also among those Russian speakers abroad who are connected with Lithuania, wrote Kazys Ulvydas, member and correspondent for the Lithuanian Academy of Science. A Jewish specialist in Lithuanian philology, and one of such stature, is truly a rarity. Though there were of course other known Jewish Lithuanian philologists - among them Benjamin Sereiski and Isidor Kisin.

Unlike the others however, as a professional philologist Ch.Lemchen never distanced himself from Jewish

culture; he worked in that field all of his life, and enriched his own nation's culture by doing a great deal in order to bring the Jewish and Lithuanian nations and cultures closer together.

In the period between the wars

he taught Lithuanian at Jewish gymnasia in Ukmergė, Kaunas, and Šiauliai, researched the interior of the wooden synagogue in the town of Pakruojis, translated the works of Sholem Aleikhem, Isaac Leibush

### HONOURABLE CHACKEL LEMCHEN!

My sincere good wishes on the occasion of your esteemed ninety-fifth birthday. The sufferings you have lived through once again remind us of the horrors and the senselessness of the tragedy which befell your nation in the middle of this century. However, your humanitarian attitude, dignified bearing, and life full of activity have shown us all the purpose for man's being, constant throughout all times. That purpose is to serve one's country, and all of the nations, all of the people within it.

Your loyalty to these principles throughout many years has not only become a fine symbol of the co-operation between our nations, not only is it esteemed by this country, it has also brought you the title of a respected man, a wise colleague, and a serious scholar.

I thank you for your dedication to Lithuanian learning and to the broadening of understanding among us all. On this occasion I wish you strong health, and the love and goodwill, gratitude and respect of those around you.

President of the Republic of Lithuania  
Valdas ADAMKUS



Peretz, Dovyd Einhorn and others into Lithuanian, wrote articles, collected lexicographic material on the dialect of Lithuania's Jews, and wrote his dissertation and later a book (published in 1970) on that subject. In 1995 he published a revised version of his work on the influence of Lithuanian on the litvak language in "Oksforder Yiddish". Ch.Lemchen was acknowledged for his contributions to Jewish culture by being granted the title of honorary member of

the Lithuanian Jewish Community.

There is no need to accentuate the significance of the aforementioned dissertation on the study of Lithuanian and Jewish linguistics. But I wish to emphasize not the professional linguistic significance of his book. We are often reminded that the Jews lived an isolated existence. That fact is quite often exaggerated, and sometimes there are reproaches and even claims that it was a considerable contributing factor psychologically to the annihilation of the Jews.

But reading Ch.Lemchen's work one understands that even though historically the Jews did in fact isolate themselves from the spiritual influence of their neighbours, as people they never ceased to interact. That interaction was so intense that, even in a sphere as autonomous as language would seem to be, the litvaks absorbed their Lithuanian surroundings.

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