

VIC

VILNIUS INTERNATIONAL CLUB

VilNews

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Good debate is always healthy! Send your comments or suggestions by e-mail to aage@vih.lt

WINTER VIEW OF THE MEDIEVAL TRAKAI CASTLE , LOCATED 30 KM FROM VILNIUS , THE CAPITAL OF LITHUANIA



Happy New Year!

Laimingų Naujųjų Metų!

The wounds of the Holocaust in Lithuania still not healed



Jews being marched from their ghetto in the centre of Vilnius (today's Old Town) to the Paneriai (Ponary) forest outside the city for execution, 1942/1943. Paneriai is an area of wooded hills on the outskirts of Vilnius, where in 1941-1944 60,000 to 70,000 Jews from Vilnius were executed. - *Drawing by Fajwel Segal.*



Jewish victims of execution before the mass burial at Paneriai, Vilnius , 1943.

Two Lithuanian ministers have had to endure partly strong criticism from Jewish quarters in recent weeks. It all started when the Minister of Justice, **Remigijus Šimašius**, on his internet blog the 2nd of December (see <http://simasius.blogas.lt/>) tried to defend and explain the Lithuanians' attitudes to Jews before and during World War II. The blog led to strong reactions from, among others, World Jewish Congress (see <http://sdjewishworld.wordpress.com/2009/12/04/world-jewish-congress-criticizes-lithuanian-officials-revisionist-view-of-the-Holocaust/>). World Jewish Congress President **Ronald S. Lauder** called the Lithuanian official's statements "disingenuous" and a distortion of the historical facts. Lauder declared: "Such rewriting of history is totally misleading and unacceptable. Instead of recognizing that many ethnic Lithuanians actively collaborated with the Nazi occupiers to round up Jewish citizens Minister Šimašius chooses to placate the revisionist in his country. It beggars belief that someone should today still argue that anti-Semitism played no role in the extermination of Lithuanian Jewry when the collaboration of so many Lithuanians with the Nazi occupiers is well-documented."

Then, just before Christmas, Lithuania's Foreign Minister, **Vygaudas Ušackas**, took part in a conference in Jerusalem with the theme "The Legacy of World War II and the Holocaust." The Minister's participation and the conference itself was afterwards discussed in an op-ed article in the Jerusalem Post, written by **Efraim Zuroff**, the Chief Nazi-hunter of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre and the director of its Israel Office. He said about the conference that it "focused solely on the recent efforts in numerous post-communist countries to rewrite the history of the Holocaust and attempt to obtain official recognition that the crimes of Communism are just as bad or worse than those of the Nazis." In his blog, Mr. Zuroff also attacked the organizers' "decision to give Ušackas a very respectable platform to once again, in typical fashion, distort the history of the Holocaust and escape the harsh criticism that Lithuanian actions deserve."

You will find Mr. Zuroff's op-ed article in Jerusalem Post at:

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JParticle/ShowFull&cid=1261364476536>

For those of you who would like to read more to get a broader perspective on the issue, we recommend the website <http://www.holocaustinthebaltics.com/>. The site is edited by Professor **Dovid Katz** (www.dovidkatz.net) of the Vilnius Yiddish Institute, Vilnius University. He came to this topic after nearly two decades of expeditions in Eastern Europe to explore the Yiddish dialectology, folklore and oral history of survivors in the region.

The book "Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust", written by **Alfonsas Eidintas**, a well-established diplomat and scholar-historian, is also truly worthwhile reading.



Vygaudas Ušackas



Remigijus
Šimašius



Ronald S.
Lauder



Efraim Zuroff



Dovid Katz



The chief of Lithuania 's secret service resigns



The CIA built one of its secret European prisons inside this exclusive riding academy outside Vilnius, Lithuania, a current Lithuanian government official and a former U.S. intelligence official told ABC News last November.

By [Craig Whitlock](#)
Washington Post Foreign Service

BERLIN -- The chief of Lithuania's secret service resigned last November, the apparent casualty of an official investigation into whether the Baltic country allowed the CIA to operate a secret prison for terrorism suspects.

Povilas Malakauskas, director of the State Security Department, did not give a reason for quitting. But Arvydas Anusauskas, the head of a parliamentary committee that is investigating reports of a CIA prison in Lithuania, said the resignation was "partially connected" to the probe.

Anusauskas said that the spy chief had been "ambiguous" when the parliamentary committee began investigating the CIA prison allegations last summer. "If the responses we had requested had been presented to us on time and more thoroughly, there probably would have been no need to hold an investigation," Anusauskas told reporters Monday.

The departure came three days after former Lithuanian president Rolandas Paksas testified that the spy agency had approached him in 2003 for permission to bring foreign terrorism suspects into the country. Paksas said he denied the request but accused the spy agency of unaccountable behavior and blamed it for his political downfall.

"It is difficult for me to say if the prison existed," Paksas told the Baltic News Service. He added, however: "I know that the desire existed to get people suspected of terrorism brought to Lithuania ."



Lithuanian leader 'impeached' for refusing CIA



Former Lithuanian President Rolandas Paksas, who reportedly resigned after he refused to allow the CIA to transfer some terror suspects to the country unofficially.

Lithuania's former president says he was impeached because of his refusal to let the CIA set up secret prisons in the country.

Rolandas Paksas made the remark during a parliamentary hearing into claims that at least eight al-Qaeda terror suspects were held by the US Central Intelligence Agency at a facility just outside the Lithuanian capital Vilnius between 2004 and 2005.

"When I was a president, I knew that there were people who wanted to bring terror suspects to Lithuania . I think that my principal disagreement to do this led to the subsequent anti-presidential campaign and impeachment," said Paksas.

Paksas explained that in spring 2003, the then-head of Lithuania 's State Security Department, Megys Laurinkus, asked him if it were possible to allow the CIA to transfer some terror suspects to the country unofficially.

According to the former president, Laurinkus hinted that a positive answer would please foreign partners. Paksas said, however, that he had refused to take that option.

Laurinkus has confirmed that he held such a conversation with Paksas.

"I informed Mr. Paksas about the present situation and about the possibility of such a request which could be received by Lithuania ," he said.

However, the former security head said that he did not want to link the conversation with Paksas' impeachment and his following resignation in 2004.

Around six months after Paksas refused the proposal, he was accused of illegally granting a Russian entrepreneur, named Yury Borisov, in exchange for sponsorship of his presidential campaign.

In April 2004, the former president was impeached by the parliament.

Reports of a secret CIA prison in Lithuania first emerged in an ABC report last August.

Lithuanian officials initially denied the claims, but the country's president later called for a full probe.



www.balticbusinessnews.com

Lithuania outnumbers all other EU states in violent deaths



The Baltic states top the EU statistics by violent deaths, with Lithuania being number one. Latvia comes in second, while Estonia is the third.

By fatal injuries, Lithuania's standardised (per 100,000 inhabitants) injury death rate was 150.9, followed by Latvia's 126 and Estonia's 112.5. As for injury deaths as percentage of all cases of death, Lithuania's figure was 12%, Latvia's and Estonia's was 9.4%.

The three Baltic states were followed by Finland , Hungary , Slovenia , Poland , and Romania . At the other end was the Netherlands with an injury death rate of 26.4.

These facts are indicated by a new report recently launched by EuroSafe. The report presents data collected in the 27 EU states over the period from 2005 to 2007.

EuroSafe reported on December 15 its latest statistics on injuries due to accident and acts of violence in the EU. The report said accidents and violence are a major public health problem, killing more than a quarter of a million people in the EU-27 each year and causing millions of injuries that need hospital treatment, a huge proportion of which are resulting in permanent disabilities. Injuries are the fourth most common cause of death, after cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and respiratory diseases.

According to the report, each year a staggering 7 million people are admitted to hospitals and 35 million people are treated as hospital outpatients as a result of an accident or violence related injury.

Every two minutes someone dies of a fatal injury - this adds up to a quarter of a million injury deaths each year within the EU.

There is a huge difference in injury fatalities throughout the EU. More than 100,000 lives could be saved each year if every country in the EU-27 reduced its injury mortality rate to the same level as Netherlands , the country that currently has the lowest rate of fatal injuries in the EU.

Each year, a massive 15 billion euros is being spent on hospital and medical costs just treating the injury casualties admitted to hospital.

Three quarters of all injuries occur at home or in leisure time.

As to road traffic and work related injuries, the trend is fortunately levelling off over the past few years, but for home and leisure injuries the trend is still rising.

NEWS FROM:



www.balticreports.com

Road fatalities down one-fourth

Written by [Nathan Greenhalgh](#) Lithuania Jan 5, 2010

VILNIUS – Lithuanian road fatalities, perennially one of the highest in Europe , decreased by 26 percent in 2009 according to the Ministry of Transport and Communication.

The total amount of deaths caused by road accidents last year was 368, down 499 from 2008. Likewise the amount of injuries dropped to 4,484 from 5,818 the previous year. Transport [...]

Seimas revises “minor protection” law

Written by [Kevin DuganLithuania, TOP NEWS](#) Dec 23, 2009

VILNIUS – The Lithuanian parliament agreed on Tuesday to change the wording in a controversial bill intending to protect minors and has removed any references to homosexuality.

The new wording bans any kind of public discussion, in or out of schools, that encourages children to engage in sexual intercourse. Formerly, it had banned any discussion that [...]

Capital of Culture: success or failure?

Written by [Nathan GreenhalghLithuania, TOP NEWS](#) Dec 30, 2009

VILNIUS – To quote Dickens: it was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

With Vilnius’ year as European Capital of Culture coming to a close, it’s clear the project failed to attract more tourists to the largest Baltic state. Recurring headlines about embezzlement and wasteful spending tarred the reputation of the Vilnius [...]

End of the line for Ignalina

Written by [Nathan GreenhalghLithuania, TOP NEWS](#) Dec 29, 2009

VISAGINAS, Lithuania – On Thursday one of the world’s largest nuclear reactors and the last Chernobyl-type channel reactor outside Russia will be shut off forever.

Since the mid-1980s the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant has supplied some three-fourth of Lithuania’s electricity needs, and allowed the country to export power to Russia, Belarus, Latvia and Estonia as well. But [...]

Recommendation:



Films by Dariusz Udrys

Our long time VIC friend, Ken Slade, recommends us to watch the following films by Dr. Darius Udrys:

Title:

"Road to Freedom: Lithuania "

by Dr. Darius Udrys (of Los Angeles , California , USA)

released February 16, 2009

about Lithuania , during the period from ~1792, to the present.

English language: <http://blip.tv/file/1772859>

(Angliskai kalba)

Lietuviu kalba: <http://blip.tv/file/1770829>

(Lithuanian language)

*****KEN's C O M M E N T*****

--My critical analysis is that the presentation is excellent ...

--For Lithuanians, this presentation will be: highly emotional and patriotic, enhance remembrance and understanding of our history, and be useful to share with non-Lithuanians ...

--For non-Lithuanians (and notably for students), this presentation will assist in the understanding of Lithuania, especially in the 20th century ... the presentation would be highly-suitable for groups; although such would benefit from simultaneous commentary by someone who is familiar / knowledgeable with what is being portrayed ...

*****Some details*****

--In the first one-half of the presentation:

most of the city photos are of Kaunas (Vilnius was occupied by Poland ~1919--1939) ... notice the 1920-1940 Lithuanian prosperity, which disappeared under the Soviet system ... notice (towards the end) the Kaunas photos of some Lithuanian civilians persecuting Jews ...

--In the second-half of the presentation:

note the German troops slaughtering en-masse the Jews ... note the swastika on the Vilnius cathedral ... in the 1989--1991 period coverage, note the Soviet tanks crushing civilians ... note the huge cannons on the tanks, which had surrounded the parliament while the elected representatives inside were withdrawing Lithuania from the USSR (one tank-cannon shot would have destroyed the parliament building) ... note the street barricades, erected by the people, against the Soviet assembled forces ... note the mass-protest assemblies of people demanding Lithuania's freedom from the USSR ...

*****Technical note*****

--for best viewing: use 'full-screen', 'high-quality' settings, with sound 'on'

--you may have difficulty viewing, if you have a slow Internet connection, or an old computer; if you still have difficulty viewing, then ask a teenager for help !!! "Kids-these-days" seem to well understand such things... !! :)

*****And: ANOTHER !!!*****

If you enjoy the above-cited presentation,
perhaps you might enjoy another presentation by Dr. Udrys:

"Millennium"

<http://blip.tv/file/2324260>

English language-- Angliskai kalba

"Tukstatmetis"

<http://blip.tv/file/2324548>

Lietuviu kalba -- Lithuanian language

--This presentation presents the historic events of Lithuania from ~1,000+ years ago: from the founding of Lithuania to the first mention of 'Lithuania', to the defeat of the Teutonic Knights; to about 1569.

--I had some difficulty understanding this presentation; I will want to re-view, and to discuss with some friends who are knowledgeable with ancient LT history ...

--I understand that Dr. Udrys has also produced another presentation,
(which I have not yet located):

"Republic" (released November 2009).

Ken-Russell Slade
Kęstutis Sladkevičius

English language-- Angliskai kalba

Vin Karnila, new contributor to VilNews:

Teaches Lithuanian companies to improve their business English



Vin Karnila was born and raised in Boston, USA, with a Scottish mother and Lithuanian father. Five years ago, he decided to move to Lithuania, where he is now actively engaged in teaching Lithuanian companies to improve their business English. Vin has worked within American business most of his life, and therefore has very good background for his new work here in Lithuania.

Here is how he explains the business concept of his company 'Tarptautinis English (TE)':

TE was established to allow companies and business people in the Vilnius area to continue their English language training in these difficult financial times, allowing its clients to have professional English language training at a fraction of the cost of other Language Schools because we do not have the high operating expenses of other such schools.

The teacher is a native speaker with experience teaching Business English and General English to companies and individuals in Lithuania and has over twenty years of international business experience communicating with people that use English as a second language

The training focuses on the practical use of English and how English should be used in written and spoken communication.

All courses are designed for the clients' specific needs so they receive the training that will most benefit them.

Another valuable service Tarptautinis English provides is their Editing Service:

Document Editing - For any written correspondence in English such as letters, brochures or email for clients who want to be sure the grammar and the sentence structure is correct and also want to be

sure it says what you want it to say.

Web Site Editing - For companies who have translated their web sites to English it would be very advisable to have them controlled and edited by TE to be sure everything is correct and people can fully understand what the company wants to explain about its services.

Presentation Editing - Do you need to do a presentation in English? Have TE edit your hand out material and also edit your media such as "Power Point". With over twenty years experience giving presentations internationally it is very possible that TE can help make your presentation more successful.

Since the Editing Service is done via the Internet TE's Editing Service is used by clients all over the world.

For more information you can visit the TE web site

www.TarptautinisEnglish.com

or email: info@TarptautinisEnglish.com

or telephone (directly to Vin) +370 618 79886

VilNews

The "VilNews" e-mails from Vilnius International Club (VIC) reach around 700 recipients worldwide, providing Lithuania-related news, articles and general information to expatriates and the diasporas. Since its founding in 2001, VIC has been a leading non-profit organisation and has created a dynamic forum for people from many nations. The club's mission is to support and encourage cultural, historic and economic vitality - in the capital city of Vilnius and in the outstandingly historic yet contemporary and cosmopolitan nation of Lithuania . Expatriates join the Lithuanian community in furthering diplomatic, business and cultural links, fulfilling VIC's mission through fellowship, monthly meetings and occasional charitable programmes.

Please feel free to forward our VilNews to your contacts around the globe, and let us know if you have friends or colleagues wishing to be included on our e-mailing list!



VilNews

VIC - Vilnius International Club,
Vokieciu 28-31, LT-01130 Vilnius , Lithuania
Mr. Aage Myhre, VIC President - VilNews Editor
Tel. direct: +370 699 33 222
E-mail: aage@vih.lt