



ISSUES, DISCUSSIONS, OPINIONS

DANTESQUE EMPTINESS



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Born in Kaunas, graduated from the Faculty of Lithuanian Language and Literature, involved in theatre studies at university. Attended Charles University in Prague in 1993, later the Institute of Polish Culture at the University of Warsaw. Completed doctoral studies at the Institute of Philology and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences in 2001.

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Kostek says: "Imagine that you are walking through a museum of ancient history. In one hall there are remnants of the Etruscan civilisation, in another the Phoenicians, in a third a presentation of recent archaeological discoveries: papyrus shreds from Cumran, a sword hilt from Massada, with inscriptions under glass ascribing these exhibits to the vanished 'Hebrew' - or perhaps 'Judaic' (scholars have not yet determined whether the latter are perhaps the same as the former) - peoples who once inhabited these regions."

Kostek is a Jew who lives on Union of Lublin Square - which has its own connections with the history of Lithuania - right near Litewska St., in Warsaw. I am a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania, and I also live in Warsaw. I often say to Kostek, who is pleased that history has finally been more propitious to the Jews and that today they have their own state, that I have no difficulty in imagining such a museum. One of the many museums of this nature is Warsaw itself - it still holds what was left after the existence, and sudden disappearance of these people. "I constantly see their faces" (also the title of an exhibition of pre-war photographs of Jews, which was displayed throughout the world, including in Vilnius), - I tell Kostek. Every day, on my way home, I pass the very few remaining buildings of what was once the Warsaw Ghetto. Watching me, with their huge eyes, from behind the windows, are their recent residents - now survivors only in photographs exhibited under glass. "Dein goldenes Haar Margarete," - I say in greeting. "Dein aschenes Haar Sulamith," - in parting.

Living "on top of Jews". In the spring of 1940, the Nazis delineated a 2.6 square metre territory (2.5 % of the entire city) on the map of Warsaw. An order issued by Ludwig Fischer, governor of Warsaw district (as it was called at that time), was proclaimed on October 3 of that same year: "Under the order regarding restrictions for residence in the General-Governorship, a Jewish district is being set up in the city of Warsaw. (...) Jews living outside the Jewish district are obliged to move into the Jewish district by October 31, 1940. Only a refugee bundle and bedding are permitted." Soon after, the Jewish district, which was made up of a large and a small ghetto, was enclosed by a 3.5 metre-high wall. On the other side of the gate into the ghetto, which was officially closed shut on November 15, 1940, there were already 360,000 (according to some sources 400,000) people - a third of the entire population of Warsaw. After Jews from the other Polish cities were moved into the Warsaw Ghetto, the number of confined persons grew to approximately 450,000 - 460,000. In time, the demographic situation in the Warsaw Ghetto "improved" - 96,000 people perished from starvation, epidemic and ill-health, and approximately 300,000 were taken away to Treblinka. In 1942, the Warsaw Ghetto contained approximately 55,000 Jews.

On April 19, 1943 (as a present to Hitler for his birthday), the SS, police, and soldiers marched into the Warsaw Ghetto. Their orders were clear - to liquidate the Ghetto and to exterminate its remaining inhabitants (who had already organised more than one previous act of resistance). Approximately 1,200 poorly armed people mounted a defence against the Nazis. They clearly understood that none of them would survive, but they knew that at least they would die proudly. Thus began the Warsaw Ghetto uprising - the first uprising in a Third Reich-occupied European city.

Several days later, the Nazis began to set fire to, and to bomb every building in the Ghetto. The

surviving rebels fought from inside bunkers, the largest of which held approximately 100 fighters, and the leader of the uprising, Mordechaj Anielewicz. Those who didn't die in the gas chambers at Treblinka, died of the gas here. Very few managed to survive. During the period from April 19 to May 15, 1943, the Nazis hauled away another approximately 50,000 captured Jews from the Ghetto. On May 16, in retaliation for the uprising, SS brigadier-general Jürgen Stroop ordered the bombing of the Great Warsaw Synagogue. Although individual shots could be heard inside the Ghetto until June, the fate of the Warsaw Ghetto had been definitively resolved.

Nearly the entire territory of the Warsaw Ghetto is visible from the windows of my 16th floor flat in a highrise, the pride of Socialist architecture, which was begun to be built by the "brotherly" hands of workers of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Poland, in 1961. On the site of the Great Synagogue stands a highrise with a multitude of banks, in place of Jewish homes as many as nineteen 16-storey buildings like mine, and a hill of 5-storey blocks whose foundations are comprised of what were once the ruins of Jewish shops, pharmacies and hospitals. After the war, it simply didn't pay to haul away the ruins. I see streets, parks, and monuments laid over the foundations of Jewish houses. I see the street, suspended over which was the bridge for Jews only to cross from the large to the small ghetto, in order not to obstruct traffic in "non-Jewish" Warsaw. And I see, I constantly see their faces. Faces of those who prayed in the synagogues, who once upon a time bought meat, fish and vegetables at what is now my marketplace, who walked and played with small children in what is now my park, who watched films in the cinema that I often frequent, who gambled in the nearby surviving casino, which I have never been to. I see the faces of those who lived, loved, suffered and dreamed here, who fought, made peace, prayed, laughed and cried here. The faces of those who vanished from the streets and buildings of what is now my city, simply because they were Jews.

It seems that I know more about the Warsaw Ghetto, about its daily routines and its miraculous stories of rescue, about its rabbis, ghetto fighters, heroes and criminals, women, men, children and old people, its orphanages, hospitals, ghetto theatres and cabarets, its cafes and variety show stars, the Poles who aided and rescued Jews, the Poles who did not help or save, but even betrayed them, the Poles who knew what was going on but remained indifferent passive observers, than I do about the ghettos of Vilnius, or of Kaunas, where I was born and grew up. Why is that? - I ask myself.

Henri Bergson says that consciousness is memory. It is that which we consciously, or sometimes even unconsciously, remember of our experiences - our family, school, music, literature, monuments, the victories and defeats of our state or nation. What do I remember, what are my experien-

ces? What, I ask myself, do those close to me remember, what are the experiences of my contemporaries?

I was born in Kaunas, where I attended a so-called normal secondary school in a new residential district, and after supper a music school. I was a high achiever, a young pioneer, and a communist youth member. During the summer I would go with my parents to the seaside, and to stay with my grandmother in the small village of Vieksniai. My grandmother, my aunts and I would go to visit the family gravesites. My mother's young brothers (who died during the war), and her great-grandparents were buried in the old cemetery, my grandfather in the new one. It was during these visits that I saw, for the first time, the huge stones with strange letters - ornamentations - standing amongst the tall dry grasses on the other side of the fence surrounding the new cemetery. I was just a child, and I remember the wind-blown, frightening and sombre rustling of the dry grasses. I was afraid of those stones, and especially of the strange and inexplicable silence that they exuded. I was even afraid to ask what they meant. I knew that people who committed suicide were buried on the other side of the cemetery fence. And grandmother once said the same about those who hadn't been baptised. No-one explained who they actually were, and I didn't ask - I was already running around, playing hide-and-seek with the farm kids, chanting: "Grab a stick and kill the Jew!" I never asked who the Jew was. No-one did.

At school I became interested in Soviet films about the Second World War. I watched everything, and was especially impressed by Stirlitz. And then I saw Mikhail Romm's "Ordinary Fascism".

That's when I found out. Found out what? That there was an Auschwitz. I found out how many citizens of the Soviet Union, France, Belgium, Italy, Poland, and Czechoslovakia were killed in the gas chambers, and that Auschwitz and Birkenau had been liberated by the heroic Soviet Army.

During the last year of school we were often taken on tourist excursions during the holidays. The

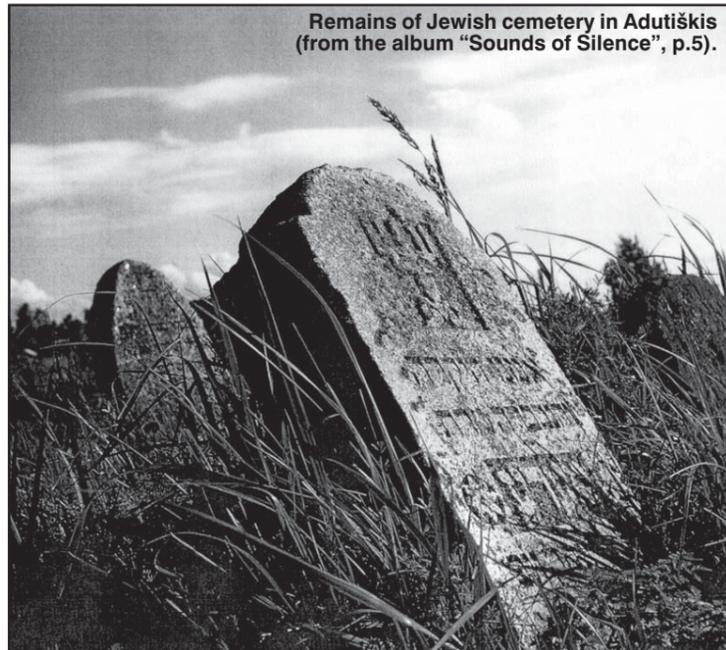
principal sites in the small Lithuanian towns were always the library, shop, church and cemetery. In our towns we saw only our Catholic cemeteries, and our wooden or stone churches.

Something completely different rose to the forefront during my student years. "Sajūdis" was formed, and for the first time I heard about Siberia! My father, who, like my grandfather, had been a political prisoner deported to Siberia with no right to return, simply said: "You didn't know, and therefore didn't tell anyone." And I didn't blame him for that.

I studied and read a great deal (the existentialists, Latin American literature, and of course what everyone read back then - Aitmatov, Solzhenitsyn, etc.). Like everyone, I hurried off to meetings; despite the dean's prohibitions I plastered walls with proclamations; during the blockade I froze in the university auditoriums and lecture halls; I defended the Radio and Television Committee, didn't watch Soviet television, and handed sweetwilliam flowers to Soviet army soldiers, wishing them bon voyage after the putsch in Moscow. I spent "vagnorkes" [temporary paper currency during 1991-1993] in Vilnius cafes and at the seaside, and I ran up the steps (sic!) of Taurio Hill to attend jazz concerts at the Union Hall.

During my last student years, I attended newly-introduced lectures on the history of Judaism, at Vilnius University. I found out about the Hasmoneans (Maccabees), about King David, Abraham, and Isaac. Nothing about the Jews of Lithuania - I wasn't yet aware that so many of them had lived for so long in Vilnius and Kaunas, and throughout the entire country! My family must have known. Later, my mother said: "You didn't know, and therefore didn't tell anyone."...

It was only when the president of newly independent Lithuania bowed his head in commemoration of the more than 200,000 murdered Jews of Lithuania, and asked for forgiveness for those Lithuanians who had mercilessly killed, shot, deported, and plundered (I didn't yet know how) the Jews, that my historic memory underwent a profound shock.



Remains of Jewish cemetery in Adutiškis (from the album "Sounds of Silence", p.5).

I recount all of this in order to show the pathway of the formation of consciousness of an ordinary, commonplace, average student of an ordinary Soviet (I use the term consciously) school in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania. Included amongst the various Orwellian experiments on the general consciousness of people, that the Soviet authorities had managed to carry out, was the exceedingly successful operation with regard to individual memory.

The Soviet school tempered it like steel. For a long time, my historic memory safeguarded (in the same way that I was told to safeguard my pioneer scarf by the victorious Soviet Army soldier who had tied its knot) the sacred fact that Soviet Union citizens made up the greatest number of victims of the Second World War. Including in Lithuania, in the territory around Vilnius - in Paneriai. An inscription on the old monument clearly bore witness to the fact that here, in the Paneriai forest, between July 1941 and July 1944, the Hitlerites had shot dead approximately 100,000 "Soviet citizens". In an effort to hide all traces, the Hitlerites had burned the corpses. For a long time there wasn't even a shadow of a thought within my historic memory, that in walking around Kaunas and Vilnius, and Lithuania as a whole, I was walking not through a cemetery of suicides and unbaptised people, but through the gigantic cemetery of the Jews of Lithuania.

I felt terrible. After all, in the Russian-translated words of Ortega y Gasset - I, am I and my environment. But I hadn't understood my environment. I defended myself by saying that I wasn't the only one - none of my classmates and friends knew anything either. I resisted the notion that I was the victim of a Soviet upbringing, a totalitarian system, a Soviet ideology. And yet I asked myself, more and more often: how was I to now relate to my own past, to my already formed historic memory, to the real past of my homeland - instead of to an imagined one - or rather to the one that I had been forced to imagine? It was difficult to admit to myself that I had been living a lie. And it was incredibly difficult to understand the fear - not only of my family - to speak out, to tell, and not to forget. A fear that continues to bind many, especially of the older generation, to this day.

At one of this year's Jerusalem book fairs, the words "j'accuse" were heard, or to be more precise, were shouted at the Lithuanians. One woman who spoke especially emotionally, even hysterically, but at the same time very movingly, had no shortage of angry words against the Lithuanians. Although the discussion took place in English, and the woman spoke English, I couldn't dismiss the thought that she was still hiding on the safe linguistic side. I had met her on the previous eve, and found that she hadn't forgotten how to speak Lithuanian. She had left Lithuania in the 1960s because, as she said, there wasn't even a trace of that which families normally leave us - a gravesite. Not even ashes. They'd been dispersed "by your northern winds". Not even memories. Nothing. It was empty, she said.

Hers wasn't the only such account. Not even the only angry one. But it was the only one that was so emotional and so painful. What had I felt? - I later asked myself. An inner self-defensive aggressiveness? Guilt? A desire to justify? A desire to quietly explain that Lithuanian and Jewish relations in Lithuania - before, during, and after the war - were somewhat more complex, not as one-sided as they appeared to her? And that, generally, everything had been not quite like, but entirely unlike, what she

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thinks? Entirely unlike... not quite like... I murmured under my breath. So, what was it like?

I was both angry, and sad and ashamed.

The world bibliography of scholarly publications, testimonies, memoirs, accusations, diaries, and documents about the Holocaust (the origins of this word, first used in 1944, do not encompass the event that we refer to today) now includes over several thousand items. Many things were seen in a different light after the Holocaust. The Holocaust became a point of accountability for many questions that were asked anew of philosophy, religion, politics, and culture. According to Karl Jasper, what happened is a warning. It would therefore be a sin to forget events which must remain in our memory.

One can now find quite a lot of literature in Lithuania (more often in libraries than in bookstores) on what, as in the title of Giorgio Agamben's book, are the remnants of Auschwitz. Many of the dreadful facts are known - but are they known by many? I know I'm not writing about anything new. But I also know my own past. And I know that there could always be someone out there who is reading about this for the first time.

I know what was in the textbooks that we used. So I was interested to see what I would find in one of the "Lietuva ir pasaulis" ("Lithuania and the World") history textbooks now recommended for 12th graders by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science. Guess what? - the 400 page book contains barely three paragraphs on the annihilation of the Jews. And these include a renunciation of a Soviet historiography claim, that "Lithuanian nationalists" aided the Hitlerites in exterminating the Jews, in the form of a statement that this is basically a lie for facts show otherwise. The three paragraphs also include a statement that, although, unfortunately, Jew-shooters assisting the Germans did appear in Lithuania, they were either the dregs of society, or fanatics blinded by anti-Semitic propaganda.

I was shocked. How could this be? As the book writes, approximately 200,000 (circa 90%) of Lithuania's Jews were exterminated - and this was it? That it was a lie that Lithuanian nationalists had assisted in killing the Jews, and not a lie that it was done by the dregs of society, by anti-Semitic, propaganda-blinded fanatics - who had "appeared" in Lithuania? Like UFO's? That's it, nothing else? This was the truth about the pogroms in which the "appeared" fanatics had beaten, humiliated, and killed Jews? These were not Lithuanians? This was all there was about the complex and ambiguous relations between Lithuanians and Jews? Only this on the hundreds of years of the history of the Jews of Lithuania?

I pick up a historical dictionary published by "Vaga", and look for the word "Litvakes". I find: Litas, "Litbelas", Litorina Sea, "Lituanica", Liubartas Gediminaitis, Lublin Union, followed by Ludwig XII, XIII, XIV, XVI, Louis Samuel, an Af-

rican politician and lawyer, Liu Shao-Chi, a Chinese state figure and theoretician for the Chinese Communist Party. I get as far as Luther Martin. No Litvakes.

I wonder, perhaps there is an entry under "Lithuanian Jews"? I turn the pages of the dictionary: Lithuanian Centre Union, Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party, Lithuanian cinema, Lithuanian Communist Party...

I don't give up, I look for "Holocaust". There it is: "Holocaust (Hebr., victim, burning), genocide of the Jewish people, carried out in Nazi Germany concentration camps. More than five million Jews were burned in crematoriums." A total of five lines - and fourteen on the Holocaust post-ice age, which began approximately 8,300 years B.C. and continues to this day.

I also find "Gaon, title of Jewish Talmud academy heads. In time the name was applied to celebrated Jewish Talmud experts." I had, in fact, been looking for the Vilna Gaon, but... And then, finally! - "Genocide (Gr., genos - race, and Lat., caedo - I kill), the destruction of groups of people for racial, national, political, or religious motives. In 1915-1916 the Turks of the Ottoman Empire killed approximately 1.5 million Armenians. German Nazis killed approximately 6 million Jews during the Second World War (ca. 200,000 in Lithuania)." No comment needed. As they say, it's all there in black and white.

Since I'm here, I think I'll look under Armenians. And I find "Armenian genocide in Turkey" - thirty-nine lines. Now just a minute, I say to myself, if there's an "Armenian genocide in Turkey", then perhaps there's a "Jewish genocide in Lithuania", or a "Jewish genocide in Europe"? ...no...

With Lithuanian society very slowly becoming open, and with the state very slowly moving towards a normal, even boring, democracy, over the last years my attitude towards history and its teaching has changed a great deal. I cannot stop questioning communism, totalitarianism, subjugated mind and memory, our path to freedom, our losses - and not just our sufferings, our conscience, our attitude to evil.

In order to avoid confusion, as Hannah Arendt used to say, I'd like to mention again that I do live in Poland, and that I haven't analysed all of Lithuania's history textbooks (I bought the aforementioned books in Lithuanian bookstores in February of this year). I read the Lithuanian press, but not every day, and I rarely listen to Lithuanian radio programmes. More often, I watch Lithuanian television. And although I follow the scientific literature on this issue, and read the cultural press, my main source of news continues to be the internet, and a lot has probably slipped right by me. I do

know that we feel that quite a lot has been accomplished in the nearly twenty years of our democratisation...

Symbolic gestures, cemeteries, plaques, films, exhibitions, conferences, seminars, books. But does anyone (other than experts and sympathisers) read those books? And how many have attended those conferences? Have many discussed and debated the issue publicly (or at least from church pulpits) - or does that happen only in quiet academic bureaus? Or maybe none of it is even necessary? After all, we've done what the European Union, Israel, and the USA have demanded of us. (Though, as Pope John Paul II said, we must demand it of ourselves, even if no-one else demands it of us.) Perhaps there's been enough beating of one's chest, of crying, of repenting for what no longer exists in Lithuania? Actually, there hasn't been enough. Because, increasingly more often, I am encountering that which in truth has remained in Lithuania after the extermination of the Jews - i.e., anti-Semitic stereotypes (and not just in proclamations by the dregs of society).

There was no anti-Semitism in my surroundings before. Naturally, I told myself - there were no Jews in my surroundings, not even a trace of their existence. No-one (for a variety of reasons) talked about them. No-one talked about the sources, origins, or deeply imbedded roots of anti-Semitism either. I used to consider any anti-Semitic episode on the street, in the marketplace, on public transport, in conversations, as street lore that wasn't worthy of attention or commentary.

I finally understood that these weren't just marginal discourses, with the appearance of slogans on walls, with the notices of defiled Jewish cemeteries, with the clearly anti-Semitic articles in the press (even in cultural publications, and accompanied by authors' names), and of course, with commentaries on the internet. In an openly anti-Semitic discourse, everything that is bad - in the opinion of the authors of such articles and commentaries - has to do with the Jews, and includes anyone who thinks or lives differently, governments that raise prices, banks that demand interest, players and fans of opposing football teams, and even - no matter how paradoxical it may sound - the Romanies, "Asiatics", and Arabs.

Of course, Lithuanian anti-Semitism differs little from Polish, French, Italian, or German anti-Semitism. But what does differ greatly from the response to anti-Semitism by Lithuanian society (including the Church), is the response by other European countries, and by their political elite and public opinion, to the same or similar anti-Semitic attacks. For example, in Germany, in the town

of Halbe, more than 8,000 citizens, with the prime minister of Brandenburg territory at their head, took to the streets to protest against neo-fascists chanting anti-Semitic slogans. In Paris, over 100,000 people, with the president in front, marched onto the Champs-Élysées in condemnation of the violation of a Jewish cemetery somewhere in a French town. Naturally (to avoid confusion, as Hannah Arendt used to say), no-one is obliged to love the Jews. No-one is deprived of the right to criticise Israeli politics. But the responsibility of every decent and honest citizen of a democratic state - of every Christian ultimately - is to be intolerant of anti-Semitism (first of all in oneself), and to struggle against demoralising hatred, the incitement of ethnic discord, the disregard for human rights, and ultimately everything which is initially only verbal aggression, and - as we already know from our history - what it leads to.

I am deeply convinced that one of the most important (though unfortunately no longer basic) sources formulating a young person's consciousness and political stand is the education system. It is therefore necessary that the Jews of Lithuania, their heritage, relations between Lithuanians and Jews, the Holocaust and the young generations of Jews who live with its trauma, anti-Semitism and its most "innocent" manifestations, Israel and the reasons for its founding, Jews in other European states, and even the relationship between Christianity and Judaism be talked about not only in closed conference halls and university auditoriums, not only at official state-level meetings, not only on a few portals deluged with endless information, but in schools as well. Alongside them should be the press, radio and television with their own mission, the Church, and the grandmothers (who really do still remember their Jewish neighbours). Also crucial are meetings with extant surviving Jews, with their children and grandchildren, who are now citizens of Israel, and of course with those Lithuanians whose sacrifice and courage ensured the birth of said grandchildren. The granting to Lithuanians of the title of Righteous Among Nations should be a public celebration broadcast widely and in detail by the media. As well, young people must be encouraged to remove anti-Semitic slogans, and to maintain Jewish cemeteries. There should be ongoing journeys along the footsteps of the Jews of Lithuania, perhaps even excursions to Auschwitz and the other concentration camps.

In other words, there must be debate, perhaps even daily, in society. Painful and uncomfortable, yes, but also liberating from the demons of the past. Debate that

occasionally ends up at an impasse (as has happened already in Germany, France, Poland), in order to later become a normal dialogue between present-day and future Lithuanians and Jews, between Lithuania and Israel.

Why? Because those who lived here with us, and who were killed here, are a traumatic experience not only for the Jews, but also for the Lithuanians. Because memory has to work - and its work is to connect places with events and individuals. Because the obligation to commemorate, as Paul Ricœur says, means not only the preservation of the traces of physical events, but also the feeling of responsibility towards others - and amongst all of those to whom we owe commemoration, it is the victims who have moral precedence. Because, as Emmanuel Levinas has said, speaking or debating are a form of salutation, and to salute someone is already to be responsible for that person. Because, as Italian writer Primo Levi, a former prisoner of Auschwitz, has said: "it happened. Which means that it can happen again." And because, after the Holocaust, everything is possible: even its denial (starting with bishop Richard Williamson, and Ahmadinedjad - and ending with the locals).

Perhaps it's hopeless to demand that today's society understand and debate what, in the history of the 20th century, is, according to many, so difficult to comprehend and to explain. In the words of Theodor Adorno: "There can be no poetry after Auschwitz." There are, nevertheless, ongoing and endless examples of intolerance, nationalism, xenophobia, and ultimately of the annihilation of peoples. Even though it's been more than sixty years since "Never again" was repeated as a curse, it has all been repeated - in Srebrenica, Rwanda, Cambodia, Czeczenia, Darfur - and it continues to be repeated.

I know that many will say that we know all of this, that it's been heard more than once. But, as Andre Gide, who was very familiar with people's behaviour, has said: because no-one listens, it needs to be repeated over and over again.

April 19 - the day of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Recently, city authorities passed a resolution to imbed bricks delineating the territory of the Warsaw Ghetto into the asphalt. I walked along the difficult-to-imagine ghetto wall, accompanied by a constantly fractured line, and memories of the past that stifled images of the present. I kept seeing strange huge stones with a kind of ornamentation, and, sitting on the stones, some people, and on their faces, the shadows of dried grasses playing like bunnies of the sun. "Kostek, - I say, - I'm dreaming, I keep seeing their faces. Perhaps I should pay for a Mass?" Kostek gives a little smile, and says: "No, a Mass isn't necessary. What is necessary is the effort to never forget, and to never allow the Dantesque hell to be repeated." "Yes, Kostek - or to allow a Dantesque emptiness to take root."

Rasa RIMICKAITĖ

NEWS, EVENTS, FACTS

"SOS - CHILDREN"

On April 29, the Lithuanian Jewish Community organised an evening at the Jascha Heifetz Hall on the occasion of Israel's Independence Day, the millennium of the name of Lithuania, and the 20th anniversary of the "Visos Lietuvos vaikai" ("All Lithuania's children") organisation. The evening included the presentation of a collection of verse by Edmundas Atkočiūnas (with a reading by Bela Shirin), a concert by pupils from the Vilnius Balys Dvarionas Music School (director Laimutė Užkuraitienė) and by the "Fajerlech" ensemble (director Larisa Vyšniaus-

kienė), as well as the opening by Elena Kubilienė, executive chairwoman of "Visos Lietuvos vaikai" ("Children of the whole Lithuania"), of an exhibition of works by Japanese photographer Kensaki Shioja, entitled "SOS - children", and of works of art by Saulius Kruopis.

The evening was organised by the directors of the Lithuanian millennium celebrations and the Lithuanian Jewish Community (assistant to the chairman, Maša Grodnikienė). Sponsors: Edmundas Armoška, Kensaki Shioja, Saulius Kruopis, Lithuanian Jewish Community.

The evening was highly suc-

cessful and of great interest to the members of the LJC.

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL

This has been the sixth year of one of the most important summer music events in Lithuania - the International Chaim Frenkel Music Festival in Šiauliai. The festival, along with the Šiauliai chamber orchestra, was set up by its artistic director, heart and driving force, conductor and violin soloist Boris Traub. The festival takes place in the villa that once belonged to the Russian leather manufacturing magnate Chaim Frenkel and his son. The villa is know one of the

cultural centres in Šiauliai.

Traditionally, the Sixth International Music Festival in Šiauliai began on June 1, International Protection of Children Day. Invited soloists included three talented participants in the children's "Uždegime talento žvakė" ("We will light the candle of talent") competition: the brothers Stasys and Antanas Makštutis, clarinet players, who performed the Concerto for two clarinets and orchestra by Karel Stamitz (1745-1801), and Judita Traubaitė, who played two movements of the Concerto for piano with orchestra by Isaak Berkovich (1902-1972). The aforementioned

competition had been organised by the Lithuanian Jewish Community in May 2008.

A concert of works by Jewish composers, dedicated to Lithuania's millennium and the Third World Litvak Congress, will take place on August 26. Compositions will include "Old Vienna" by L. Stokowski - J. Heifetz; "Contrition" and "Repentance" by Ernest Bloch; the theme from the film "Schindler's List" by John Williams; three songs by Maurice Ravel; works by Julius Engel; Jewish folk songs. Soloists: Boris Traubas, Liora Grodnikiaitė, Ramutis Talocka. Conductor: Jonas Janulevičius.