



RESULTS OF THE TRAVELLING SUMMER SCHOOL **CHALLENGING THE PAST: JEWISH HERITAGE STUDY**

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Preface



The summer school programme was developed within the framework of the project that was carried out with the partial financial support of Nordplus and Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund.

The project partners were the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Latvia (Riga), the Jews in Latvia museum (Riga), the International Centre for Litvak Photography (Kaunas) and Paideia (Stockholm). Also participating in the project were the Maceva Litvak Cemetery Catalogue project (Vilnius) and the Šeduva Jewish Memorial Fund (Vilnius/ Šeduva).

Consolidation of the accumulating practical experiences and theoretical knowledge of the participating institutions allowed to design an innovative cross-sectoral and cross-curricular learning platform in the field of Jewish heritage which was introduced to and literally road tested on a group of young professionals, educators and opinion makers from Latvia and Lithuania during a six-day travelling pilot seminar proving to be an effective approach in addressing the value of an integrated and multi-cultural society.

Objectives

The main objective of the travelling summer school was to raise awareness of local Jewish heritage among young people in Latvia and Lithuania and to give a powerful impulse for the active engagement in its preservation.

The school consisted of a six-day programme held in six Latvian and Lithuanian towns and cities with former large Jewish communities (Riga, Bauska, Pakruojis, Šeduva, Kėdainiai and Kaunas) aimed at giving participants the rare opportunity of seeing how Jewish history has influenced local culture and vice versa, to explore Jewish life and culture today and to immerse themselves in Jewish heritage and history.

Through the study of Jewish heritage, the participants engaged in an ongoing debate over the value of multiculturalism and the importance of minority integration whilst gaining practical tools for their individual working environments.

The programme included a diverse combination of lectures, workshops and meetings with a range of professionals working directly in the field of Jewish cultural heritage, and combined the complementary subjects of Jewish culture, religion and heritage with history, covering the historical, textual, and linguistic contexts of Jewish heritage. It was conducted by professionals with recognised expertise.

The programme was co-organised by:

In Latvia

- Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Latvia (Riga)
- Jews in Latvia museum (Riga)

In Lithuania

- International Centre for Litvak Photography (Kaunas)
- Litvak Cemetery Catalogue Maceva (Vilnius)
- Šeduva Jewish Memorial Fund (Vilnius/Šeduva)

In Sweden

- Paideia—The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden (Stockholm)



Outcomes & Achievements

Sixteen participants from Latvia and Lithuania attended the summer school. They were open-minded, ambitious leaders and young professionals/creatives from all backgrounds.

In general, the participants mentioned that the programme was rich in content and extremely useful for connecting with people working in the field. It provided a great opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills required to use local sources of Jewish heritage.

The summer school equipped the participants:

- With the enthusiasm and interest required to work with local Jewish heritage.
- To perceive Latvian and Lithuania Jewish heritage and history as an integral part of Latvian and Lithuanian culture and history.
- To understand the significant role that Jewish heritage can play in tackling social challenges and addressing broad topics such as cultural diversity, integration etc.
- With ways of using and utilising the rich and multifaceted sources of Jewish heritage.
- With the necessary skills to work more effectively and expand their individual perspectives over borders and across institutional boundaries.

At the end of the programme, participants made presentations of their key findings and potential directions for future work.



Highlights

A small photography exhibition was created from pictures the participants took during the programme. These pictures give some insight into the programme highlights and atmosphere.

1 Baiba Plakane

Kedainiai, Lithuania

An 'I-Thou' moment as formulated by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber.



2 Eimantas Banevičius

Žanis Lipke Memorial, Riga

The photo shows the atmosphere of the memorial and the strange dark blurry figure symbolises the passing lives of the ones who come here. It's also an example of stopping and looking deeper into the iceberg of Jewish culture.



3 Jeļena Larina

Ninth Fort Monument, Kaunas

It's a challenge for me to get used to the idea that the Jewish world is gone from Eastern Europe.

4 Ronita Kiršnere

Žanis Lipke Memorial, Riga

This young apple symbolises the hope of humanity, without violence and discrimination. Each new fruit of this tree will be better than the previous one.



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5 Aigars Noviks

Riga Jewish Community

I still believe there'll always be a light at the end of the tunnel, and cultural traditions whose basics are built through the centuries will always remain indestructible.

6 Dzintra Romanovska

Site of the former synagogue, Šeduva, Lithuania

Now in this square is town's marketplace. Let's be honest—the clothes are cheap and tasteless and somehow this 'fashion' tries to copy Western pop culture symbolised by this girl with pink chewing gum. You can call it globalisation, Westernisation etc. But somehow I saw it like losing something, not achieving.

7 Signe Irbe

Riga Synagogue

I felt the most patient here. Ideally, I would have chosen a picture of the three kind and fun elderly gentlemen sitting opposite me at the shabbat dinner, had the chance been possible.

8 Kaspars Strods

Žanis Lipke Memorial, Riga

We all should be in the right place and inspire other people.

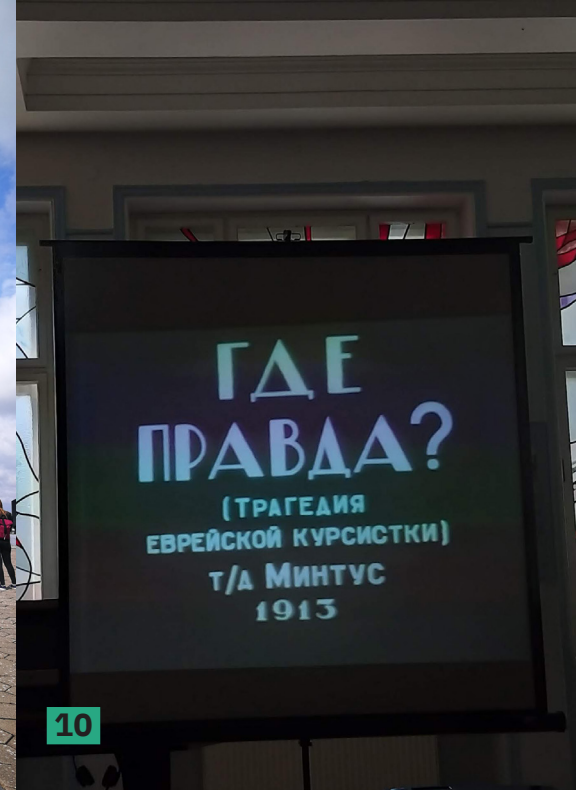
9 Līva Irbe

Ninth Fort Monument, Kaunas
The power of silence.



10 Asta Ciceniece

Jews in Latvia museum, Riga
The picture reflects the powerful moment of old cinema and live music, the special surroundings combined altogether. The phrase is about a search for truth which doesn't always really exist, but we still do our best to find it. In our travelling school the truth would be the uncovering of the world of Judaism in our region. Best experiences and emotions.



11 Sabīne Vītola

Šeduva, Lithuania
This tiny house really spoke to me. And the walk in the former shtetl moved my heart. Highlight of the week.



12 Irma Žilėnienė

Šeduva, Lithuania
This picture has multiple layers. First, it shows the sad reality of small Lithuanian towns. Second, it shows how people chose the easiest way of existing. Third, in the context of our topic, it arouses angry feelings in me when I see that some people are unable to value and live their lives whilst this gift was taken away from others.





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13 Augustė Labenskytė

Žanis Lipke Memorial, Riga

Self-portrait. Because every day we make various decisions. And sometimes we need to confront ourselves by making complicated decisions. In such cases we need to ask ourselves: what would be the right thing to do? Right not only for us, but also for others. Because our decisions not only create our future, but may also determine the fate of others.

14 Vida Endriukaiyte

Žaliakalnis Old Jewish Cemetery, Kaunas

I think this photo summarises the whole week, because it looks like research and memory at the same time.

15 Zane Krūmiņa

Former Pakruojis Synagogue, Lithuania

Window for new opportunities, ideas, knowledge and friendship. Just look through it. Try it..

16 Reda Žilėnaitė

Rabbi Ilya Krumer, Riga Synagogue

In Judaism a rabbi is a teacher of the Torah, so I wanted to take a photo of this symbolic moment.

Contact



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Litvak Cemetery Catalogue MACEVA

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Photos by the International Centre for Litvak Photography and the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Latvia.