

# Considering History, Understanding Memory

80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liquidation of the Kovno Ghetto  
Vytautas Magnus University & Sugihara Diplomats for Life Foundation  
Senate Hall, S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas  
Summer Conference: July 8 & July 9, 2024

Public Invited: No Prior Registration Necessary



The photographer Zvi Kadushin (George Kadish) in Kovno, probably after liberation. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives #10680. Courtesy of George Kadish/Zvi Kadushin, 1944. Copyright United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

**Exhibition July 8 to July 9, 2024:** *The Photographer of the Kovno Ghetto*, George Kadish/Zvi Kadushin, Senate Hall, VMU, S. Daukanto g. 28.

**Organizing Committee:** Dr. Linas Venclauskas, Dr. Ina Pukelytė, Dr. Daiva Price, Shifra Poupko, and Lisa Storer (contact: [lisa.storer@vdu.lt](mailto:lisa.storer@vdu.lt)). We are thankful for the support from the VMU Office of the Rector and the Rector's Council, VMU Dept. of History, VMU Faculty of Arts, VMU Gallery 101, Sugihara Diplomats for Life Foundation, German Embassy, Israeli Embassy, United States Embassy, Kaunas Jewish Community, Kaunas Jewish Center, and the Solo Society, Kaunas. **UPDATED: JUNE 21, 2024**



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| <b>Day 1: July 8, 2024</b> | <b>Events at VMU Senate Hall, S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas</b>   |
| 9:30 am - 10:00 am         | Meet & Greet: Coffee/Tea  |
| 10:00 am - 10:30 am        | Moderator: VMU Vice Rector, Dr. Vilma Bijeikienė:<br>- VMU Rector Dr. Juozas Augutis<br>- Ambassador, the Honorable Hadas Wittenberg Silverstein<br>- Ambassador, the Honorable Kara McDonald<br>- Ambassador, the Honorable Dr. Cornelius Zimmerman<br>- Gercas Žakas, Chairman, Kaunas Jewish Community |
| 10:30 am - 11:10 am        | Dr. Tobias Brinkmann: "Global Ties: Jewish Migration from Central Lithuania before 1914"  |
| 11:10 am - 11:50 am        | Dr. Ina Pukelytė: "Lithuanian Jewish Theatre Rewind: from the End to the Beginning"   |
| <b>11:50 am – 1:00 pm</b>  | <b>LUNCH BREAK</b>  |
| 1:00 pm - 1:40 pm          | Dr. Dina Porat: "Editing <i>The Kovno Ghetto Diary</i> "<br>(live-stream: TEAMS)  |
| 1:40 pm - 2:20 pm          | Dr. Eliyana Adler: "Memories of Jewish Kovne in Postwar Memorial Books"   |
| 2:20 pm - 3:00 pm          | Michael Shubitz: "Family Memories"  |
| 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm          | Coffee/Tea  |
| 3:30 pm - 4:00 pm          | Walk to Sugihara House Museum: Vaižganto g. 30, Kaunas  |
| 4:00 pm - 4:30 pm          | Tour of Sugihara House Museum: Vaižganto g. 30, Kaunas<br>Coffee/Tea  |
| 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm          | Film: <i>Kovno Ghetto: A Buried History</i> , Sugihara Museum   |
|                            | <b>DINNER BREAK</b>   |

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| <b>Day 2: July 9, 2024</b> | <b>Events at VMU Senate Hall, S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas, &amp; The Historical Presidential Palace, Vilniaus g. 33, Kaunas</b>   |
| 9:30 am - 10:00 am         | Coffee/Tea  |
| 10:00 am - 10:50 am        | Jenny Kagan: "Family Memories"  |
| 10:50 am - 11:30 am        | Saulius Beržinis: film sections: Kovno Ghetto   |
| <b>11:30 am -12:30 pm</b>  | <b>LUNCH BREAK</b>  |
| 12:30 pm - 1:10 pm         | Dr. Daiva (Citvarienė) Price: "Confronting Silence. Holocaust History in the Kaunas European Capital of Culture Project"  |
| 1:10 pm - 2:20 pm          | Panel Moderator: Dr. Ina Pukelytė:<br>"Considering History/Understanding Memory," Saulius Beržinis, Dr. Christoph Dieckmann, Dr. Lara Lempertinė, Dr. Šarūnas Liekis, and Dr. Linas Venclauskas |
| 2:20 pm - 3:00 pm          | Dr. Arkadi Zeltser, "Back to Normal Life After the Holocaust: The Case of Lithuania"  |
| 3:00 pm - 3:10 pm          | Closing remarks: Dr. Linas Venclauskas, Dr. Ina Pukelytė, and Lisa Storer   |
| 3:20 pm – 3:45 pm          | Walk to The Historical Presidential Palace:<br>Vilniaus g. 33, Kaunas   |
| 3:45 pm – 5:00 pm          | Guided tour & view of exhibition:<br><i>Kaunas Ghetto: Reality and Memory</i>   |

## CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Dr. Eliyana Adler is a Professor of history and Jewish Studies and teaches East European Jewish history. Research interests include: modern Jewish experience in Eastern Europe, history of education, religion, gender studies, Holocaust historiography, and memory. Her book, *Survival on the Margins: Polish Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Union* (2020) won the Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research and the Rachel Feldhay Brenner Award in Polish Jewish Studies. She has authored and edited several additional books.

Saulius Beržinis is a Lithuanian filmmaker recognized worldwide. His many films over the past 30 years are a testament to the pursuit of historical truth of the Holocaust in Lithuania. He has received a number of international humanitarian awards. He established The Independent Holocaust Research Archive in Lithuania.

Dr. Tobias Brinkmann teaches at Penn State University and is the director of the Jewish Studies Program. Research interests include: migration history, Jewish migration within and from Eastern and Central Europe to North America after 1800 and the wider context (American immigration, history of refugees, migration in modern Europe and beyond). He is the author of many publications including the recently published, *Between Borders: The Great Jewish Migration from Eastern Europe* (2024).

Dr. Christoph Dieckmann teaches in the Weiss-Livnat International Program of Holocaust Studies at the University of Haifa. Research interests include: Yiddish historiography, anti-Jewish persecution, the Holocaust in Lithuania and Ukraine. He is a “Holocaust” historian for the Ukrainian History Global Initiative. He has authored and edited numerous publications including *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941-1944* (2011), winner of the Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research (2012).

Jenny Kagan, an artist, tells her stories through design and sound. She incorporates the language of theatre and the art of drawing with techniques of lighting and stagecraft to create her installations. She is primarily interested in curating the moment of encounter with her audience to surprise, delight, and invite, as she engages focus. Installations inspired by her parents’ survival in the Kovno ghetto reflect on the contemporary relevance of their interwoven stories.

Dr. Lara Lempertinė is the head of the Judaica Research Center at the Documentary Heritage Department in the National Library of Lithuania and the curator of its Judaica collection. Her field of expertise is the cultural history of the European and Lithuanian Jewry. She is an author of numerous articles and editor of several books, curator of exhibitions, participant and organizer of Lithuanian and international events dedicated to Jewish culture and its preserving and memorialization.

## CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Dr. Šarūnas Liekis is the Vytautas Magnus University Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy and a Professor at the Dept. of Political Science. Research interests include: history, political science, minorities, religion politics, and ego-documentation. He has served as an expert for the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and he is Chairman of the executive group of national project *Tauta Ir Valstybė (The Nation and the State)*, Research Council. He has published numerous monographs, studies, and scientific articles.

Dr. Dina Porat is a Professor emerita in the Department of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University and Senior Academic Advisor of Yad Vashem. She is the Founding Head of the Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, and held the Alfred P. Slaner chair in Antisemitism and Racism, both in TAU. Dr. Porat Served as the Academic Advisor of the Task Force for the Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, now titled IHRA. She was awarded a number of prizes for her many publications, including the Raoul Wallenberg medal.

Dr. Daiva (Citvarienė) Price is an art curator, researcher, cultural producer, and a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts of Vytautas Magnus University, with an interest in memory and museum studies. She has created several memory projects including "Sites of Memory" and the "Spirit Guide to the Old Kaunas." She curated the "Litvak Culture Forum" and the "Memory Office" program for Kaunas European Capital of Culture, 2022.

Dr. Ina Pukelytė teaches at Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Arts. Research interests include: Jewish theatre and migration, theatre and totalitarian regimes, theatre, and policies of memory. She is the author of many articles and publications including *Jewish Theatre in Lithuania during the Interwar Period* (2017) and *War and Culture: Lithuanian Theatre during the Nazi Occupation* (to be published in 2024).

Michael Shubitz is an Israeli cameraman and photographer who works for German Television ARD and Bayerischer Rundfunk. His photography exhibition, "Back to Kaunas," presents portraits and stories of survivors of the Kovno Ghetto. His current work focuses on his family history.

Dr. Linas Venclauskas is a historian at Vytautas Magnus University. Research interests include: Jewish history, modern anti-Semitism in Lithuanian society, Lithuanian media from the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, and the Holocaust. He collaborates with the Sugihara House Museum, including as a board member, program director, and curator. His numerous publications include, *Case of Texts: Lithuanian anti-Semitic Discourse from the second half of the 19th century to 1940* (2022). He is a professional tour guide of the Kovno ghetto.

Dr. Arkadi Zeltser is the director of the Moshe Mirilashvili Center for Research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union at Yad Vashem. Research interests include: Holocaust in the USSR, Yiddish-language Soviet propaganda during World War II, Jewish memory of the Holocaust, relations between Jews and non-Jews, Jews in the NKVD. He is the author and editor of numerous publications including, *The Jews of the Soviet Provinces: Vitebsk and the Shtetls 1917–1941* (Russian, 2006) and *Unwelcome Memory: Holocaust Monuments in the Soviet Union* (English, 2018; Russian, 2023).



**Memorial Concert: July 10, 2024: 15:00 pm-17:00 pm:** Presented by Kaunas Jewish Community at Aula Magna (in the Faculty of Catholic Theology, VMU), Gimnazijos g. 7, Kaunas. Commemoration ceremony at the Kovno ghetto Memorial, Kriščiukaičio gatvė 12/Linkuvos gatvė 2, Kaunas: after the concert.