

The Memorial Museum of the Holocaust in Lithuania

For many years now the establishment of a new Holocaust Memorial Museum in Lithuania's capital Vilnius has been on the agenda of the *Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum*. The museum already runs a Holocaust Exposition located in a small green wooden house, which only serves as a temporary solution and quite frankly is not suitable for the importance of the topic. In light of recent events and developments the museum has strengthened its efforts to establish the new *Memorial Museum of the Holocaust in Lithuania*.

The plans for the new museum are to locate it in the former ghetto territory and the historic centre of the city in a building which formerly served as the Vilnius Ghetto Library and that is already in the possession of the museum. Not only would it put the museum's building in the suitable historic context, but it would also make a clear statement about, and be a strong reminder of the importance of remembrance of the Holocaust in Lithuania. Furthermore, with this building the museum would be able to show its entire collection of original artifacts and items which it was unable to exhibit until now due to bad conditions and lack of space in the current Holocaust exhibition.

The *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (the dealing with the past) in Lithuania still has a long road ahead and specifically the remembrance of the Holocaust is not without controversy. The memories of the Soviet occupation and crimes are still very vivid and emotional, thus overshadowing more often than not the comparatively »short« Nazi occupation and the Holocaust in Lithuania. A clear example of this is the so called and well known *Museum of Genocide Victims* in Vilnius, which is located on *Gedimino prospektas*, the main street of the city. The museum mainly deals with the Soviet oppression within a largely nationalistic narrative. It barely touches upon the topic of the Holocaust, and the Lithuanian collaboration connected to it.

The above-mentioned historic building, where the new museum would be located, is unfortunately in a very bad shape and unquestionably would need an overall renovation. There is no funding for the project at the moment, but the museum has initiated an investment plan.

Overall the establishment of this new museum would be a strong signal and mark a major step in the right direction of accounting for the past by the Republic of Lithuania. It would be very helpful if representatives of ICMEMO were to visit Vilnius, briefly but visibly, to provide moral support for this initiative.

CV Neringa Latvyte-Gustaitiene

I graduated from the History Faculty at the Vilnius University. Since 1999 I've been working as an historian at the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum. Since 2010 I am head of the History Research Department and since June 2016 I'll be a temporary managing head of Paneriai memorial as well.

I was a curator of the permanent Holocaust Exhibition and 3 temporary exhibitions, author of several books, participant and speaker of many international conferences on the Holocaust topic, researcher of the EHRI project (2012-2014) and member of the work packages WP02 (Dissemination and Communication), WP04 (Training and Education) and consultant of WP09-10 (Data Identification and Integration) of the EHRI2 (2015-2020). Since 2014 I am member of the Board of the project of complex rearrangement of Paneriai mass killing site memorial. In 2015 I've started PhD studies at the Faculty of Communications at the Vilnius University. The title of the theses is *Communication of the Difficult/Trauma Heritage in the Content of a Changing Society: Places of Holocaust Remembrance*.

CV Kornelis Spaans

Kornelis holds Masters degrees in Law and in Cultural sciences. He worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in South-East Asia. He was on the board of an international bank in London. He was a diplomat, ultimately serving as ambassador, with postings in Asia, Africa, Europe and North and South America and as chairman of several United Nations committees. He joined ICOM in 2007. He has been involved in museum-, memorial- and remembrance issues.
