



FROM KOVNO TO KAUNAS

Welcome to Kaunas, or Kovno, as this might be the name you are more used to hear. Kovno was very different 80 or 90 years ago from what Kaunas is today. Back then, it was the provisional capital of Lithuania, a new country on the map that had declared its independence in 1918. The economics was growing and many other factors were actually the same as they are in 2017. The streets were the same as today, a lot of the houses were the same, it was lively and full of people. But it was a different city. The landscape was different. The ambience was different. Music, theatre, cafes, private businesses and factories, schools and universities. Still here today but different.

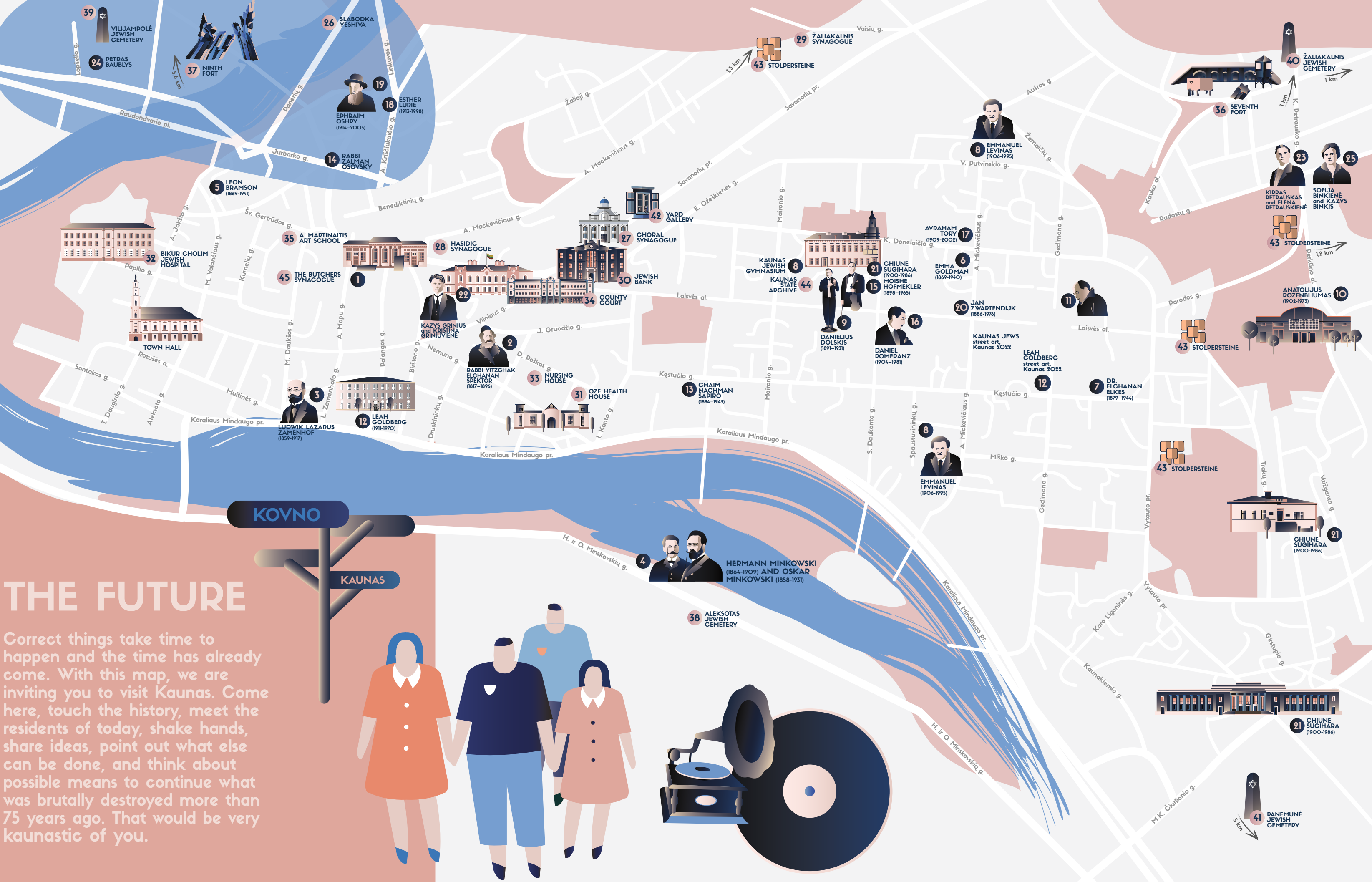
Due to various circumstances, both local and global, it's only now that we are starting to finally assemble the puzzle that was left after the Second World War and the Holocaust and then frozen by the Soviet Occupation of the country. It took a couple of decades following the restoration of our independence to accept the history and to once again remind ourselves it cannot be repeated.

BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

Approximately 37 thousand Jews lived in Kaunas in 1933 – that's about 25% of the population. In the interwar period, there were about 40 synagogues and prayer houses, as well as a great number schools, in the city. The community was deeply involved in the cultural, political and social life of Kaunas. Jewish people were merchants, real estate contractors, doctors, engineers, factory owners, craftsmen, shoemakers, tailors, musicians, painters... Anything you can name, really. A huge number of buildings included in today's list of cultural heritage were either designed, constructed, contracted, owned, or lived by the members of the community. The first private art gallery, the first recordings of Lithuanian music, the first Olympian of Lithuania or the best sports arena in Europe and many other achievements – none of this would have been possible without the people we have included in the Litvak Landscape.

THE KAUNAS GHETTO

As it was mentioned before, around 37 thousand Jews lived in Kaunas before the second world war. Only around 3000 of them survived. The Kaunas Ghetto in the Slabodka district, a neighbourhood inhabited by Jews for many centuries, was officially established on August 15th, 1941, a couple of months after the Kaunas pogrom during which more than 3000 people were killed. 10 thousand people from the ghetto were murdered in the Ninth Fort on October 29th of the same year. The ghetto was turned into a concentration camp in Autumn 1943. It was burned in July 1944. Around 5000 people were transferred to concentration camps and only a few hundred managed to escape. It was one of the longest-running ghettos in Lithuania. It was also the most photographed one in Europe. The archives of the Kaunas ghetto Jewish police are kept in the Central State Archive of Lithuania.



THE FUTURE

Correct things take time to happen and the time has already come. With this map, we are inviting you to visit Kaunas. Come here, touch the history, meet the residents of today, shake hands, share ideas, point out what else can be done, and think about possible means to continue what was brutally destroyed more than 75 years ago. That would be very kaunastic of you.



THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF LITHUANIA

www.lzb.lt

The Jewish national rebirth in Lithuania coincided with the Lithuanian struggle for liberation from Soviet occupation. On August 25, 1988, it was officially decided to create a Lithuanian Jewish Cultural Society; the founding meeting took place on March 5, 1989. The mission of the Community is to unite the Litvaks around the world, to celebrate Jewishness and to preserve the Litvak culture. The Chairwoman of The Jewish Community of Lithuania is Faina Kuklinsky.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF KAUNAS

Led by Gercas Žakas, the local Jewish community preserves the Litvak culture and celebrates the most important Jewish days. Members of the community organize and attend various cultural events as well as initiate the remembrance of events and people important in the history of the Jewish community in Kaunas and Lithuania.



THE SUGIHARA HOUSE

www.sugiharahouse.com

One of the stops in the map is The Sugihara House-Museum at the former Japanese Consulate in the Žaliakalnis district. It's definitely a very good place to start if it's your first attempt to clean some dust off history books or your first visit to Kaunas. The director of the museum, Simonas Dovidavičius, contributed greatly to the Litvak Landscape project as if it was his own and we can't be thankful enough for everything he gave, showed and told us.

MACEVA / THE LITVAK CEMETERY CATALOGUE

litvak-cemetery.info

A small group of dedicated individuals involved in maintaining and documenting, through photographs, the last remaining Jewish cemeteries in Lithuania, established a non-governmental, non-profit organization called "Maceva" in 2011. The Litvak cemetery catalogue is available online for those looking for information about the resting places of their loved ones. "Maceva" is actively involved in the restoration of the Žaliakalnis Jewish cemetery.

TOURISM INFORMATION

"KAUNAS IN"



Laisvės al. 36, Kaunas / +370 616 50991
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#kaunastic #visitkaunas

More of the "Litvak Landscapes" and other kaunastic routes you can find in the digital version on kaunastika.lt.

IT'S KAUNASTIC

facebook.com/kaunastic

The Litvak Landscape is part of the It's Kaunastic project started in 2015. The idea sprung off a word play turning "fantastic" into "kaunastic". The project, consisting of printed maps offering different routes (the Sugihara route, Baltic history, gastronomic guide and the likes), a blog and its social media profiles, reflects the vivid history and today of Kaunas and is aimed at the international audience.

THE PROJECT

THE LITVAK LANDSCAPE IS, TO START WITH, A MAP MIXING DIFFERENT CHAPTERS AND LAYERS OF THE HISTORY OF KAUNAS. IT CONNECTS PEOPLE AND THEIR IDEAS, BUILDINGS AND THEIR RESIDENTS, LITVAKS AND LITHUANIANS, THE PAST AND THE PRESENT – AND IT'S ALSO INVITING TO COLLABORATE IN THE FUTURE.

AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION, NAMES, PROFESSIONS, DEEDS, DATES AND EVENTS, SCATTERED AROUND IN BOOKS, ARCHIVES, NEWSPAPERS AND WEBPAGES, WERE DISCOVERED WHEN COMPILING THE LIST OF THE STOPS IN THE ROUTE – AND THE PROCESS WAS HEART-BREAKING, TO SAY THE LEAST, AT TIMES. IT WASN'T POSSIBLE TO INCLUDE EVERYTHING THAT IS OUT THERE, BUT THE PREPARATION DEFINITELY LAID GROUND FOR A BIGGER PROJECT SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE.
PUBLISHED 2018, UPDATED 2023

THE PEOPLE

1 ABRAHAM MAPU (1808-1867)

A. Mapu g.

Abraham Mapu, born in Slabodka, Kaunas, is considered the first Hebrew novelist. It's probably true he wrote his novels about life in ancient Israel in a pergola on the Aleksotas hill, making the district a popular yet romantic getaway destination for later generations of Litvaks in Kaunas. The Mapu library on Ūžeskiėnės g., established in 1908, was destroyed during the Holocaust. The Mapu street in the Old Town received its name in 1919 – it was changed during the Soviet occupation but the correct version was implemented again in 1989. What's today a youth literature and music library on A. Mapu g. 18 was built as a Jewish community canteen at the beginning of the 20th century and later used as headquarters for the Jewish Independence Fighters Union and editorial office of "Apšvalga" newspaper.

2 RABBI YITZCHAK ELCHANAN SPEKTOR (1817–1896)

Former Jewish Orphanage, J. Gruodžio g. 15

Rabbi Spektor, a great authority among the Jews of Russian empire, was appointed the Chief Rabbi of Kaunas in 1864 after serving in other cities of the empire. He is considered to be one of the most famous Rabbis and Talmudic sages of the 19th century. He corresponded with Chief Rabbis around Europe and was in touch with all developments of the Holy Land and the Jewish communities living there. Various institutions were named to commemorate the memory of Rabbi Spektor around the world after his death, the one in Kaunas being the Jewish Orphanage in J. Gruodžio g.

3 LUDWIK LAZARUS ZAMENHOF (1859-1917)

Former synagogue, now Institute of Family Relations, L. Zamenhofo g. 9

The creator of Esperanto language lived and worked in different places of the Russian Empire, but Kaunas is where he met his wife Klara Zilbernik – her father actually sponsored the publishing of the first Esperanto book. The street where the Zilbernik family lived was given the name of L. Zamenhof before WW2. It's believed Zamenhof married Zilbernik in a synagogue on the very same street; the synagogue has been recently renovated and is used as a psychology institute. Guided tours are, however, not available.

4 HERMANN MINKOWSKI (1864-1909) AND OSKAR MINKOWSKI (1858-1931)

H. ir O. Minskovių k.

There's a street in Kaunas that can bring you relatively close to Albert Einstein. His teacher Hermann Minkowski, born in Aleksotas, Kaunas, showed in 1907 that the special theory of relativity could be understood geometrically as a theory of four-dimensional space-time. Hermann's brother Oskar was a medical researcher – even today, the Minkowski prize is awarded annually outstanding original work of a younger investigator in diabetes research. It's also important to add that the brothers' father Lewin Boruch Minkowski (1825-1884), a first-guild merchant, subsidized the construction of The Choral synagogue in Kaunas.

5 LEON BRAMSON (1869-1941)

ORT Jewish Technical Institute (now Vytautas Magnus University), Jonavos g. 40

The Kaunas-born Jewish activist and the member of the first elected Russian Parliament in 1906-1907, later became the leader and organizer of the World ORT, or the Jewish Association for the Promotion of Skilled Trades, founded in 1880. In 1922, he co-founded the American ORT federation. More than 1000 skilled workers, both men and women, graduated from the institute in Kaunas from 1921 till the Second World War.

6 EMMA GOLDMAN (1869-1940)

"Emma" social centre, A. Mickevičiaus g. 37

The political activist, anarchist and writer emigrated to the United States when she was 16. This means not much can be traced about the rebel woman's life in Slabodka, a suburb of Kaunas at that time, where she was born. In the very end of 2016, the "Emma" social centre offering a range of resources for groups and individuals wishing to organize in the spirit of co-operation, solidarity and mutual aid was opened on A. Mickevičiaus street. It is actually the first-ever tribute to Goldman in Lithuania.

7 DR. ELCHANAN ELKES (1879–1944)

Kęstučio g. 8

Born into a rabbi family in Kalvarija, Elchanan Elkes worked as a personal doctor of the German ambassador in Kaunas for many years. He also healed people in the Bikur Holim hospital. In 1941, he was elected as the Head of the Judenrat in the Kaunas Ghetto and, accepting it with great reluctance, did all he could to save as many lives as possible. In 1944, Elkes died in Landsberg, a sub-camp of Dachau, after a hunger strike as he refused to participate in the "selections".

"Let truth be always before you and under your feet. Truth will guide you and show you the path of life", he wrote in one of his last letters to his son Joel and daughter Sarah. His wife Miriam survived Stutthof and moved to Israel after the war. His son who had left Lithuania in 1930 to study in London was one of the most important researchers in the field of schizophrenia of the 20th century.

8 EMMANUEL LEVINAS (1906-1995)

Spaustuvinių k. 1
Square near Žaliakalnis funicular,
V. Duvinskio g.
Kaunas Jewish Gymnasium, Maironio g. 30

"Society is the miracle of moving out of oneself" is a well-fitting quote by Emmanuel Levinas, a Kaunas-born philosopher who spent most of his adult life in France where he moved to in 1924. In order to record his legacy and roots in a more proper way than it has been done so far (there's a memorial plaque on his family house on Spaustuvinių g.) a group of enthusiasts pitched for a Levinas memorial square in Kaunas and a space for that was designated near the Žaliakalnis funicular. It's hoped the actual creative work for the memorial will start in 2017. The Jewish Gymnasium was located on the other side of the street from Bank of Lithuania. Emmanuel Levinas graduated from the school when it was still taught in Russian.

9 DANIELIUS DOLSKIS (1891–1931)

Statue, Laisvės al.

Danielius Dolskis, a Vilnius-born singer, only spent a couple of years in Kaunas before his premature death from pneumonia but he's one of the most important persons in Lithuanian music. The world-travelling musician was actually the first to start singing in Lithuanian and encouraging new songs! You can pay a visit to his statue in Laisvės alėja (fresh flowers are encouraged to be put in statue's hands) and his grave in the Old Jewish Cemetery in Žaliakalnis.

10 ANATOLIJUS ROZENBLUMAS (1902-1973)

Kaunas Sports Hall, Dėrkūno al. 5

The Białystok-born engineer Anatolijus Rozenblumas was responsible for construction of numerous important buildings erected in interwar Kaunas, such as the Central Post Office and the Officers' Club. In 1938, it was announced Kaunas will be hosting the European basketball championship – but a new hall had to be built for that. Not a single architect agreed to work with such a tight deadline (6 months) but Rozenblumas bravely stepped in and designed a hall that was immediately recognized as a masterpiece. Still is! You can visit an occasional game or a concert there or simply stop by on your way to the Sugiara House. Rozenblumas managed to escape from the Kaunas ghetto, was saved by local people and later taught in universities. His son is an architect in Tel Aviv.

11 NEEMIJA ARBITBLATAS/ ARBIT BLATAS (1908–1999)

Nepriklausomybės a. 3 / Gedimino g. 36
Dailės gimnazija / Pelėdos

Arbit Blatas opened the first private art gallery in the Baltics (Nepriklausomybės a. 3) at an impressively young age of 24. The financial side of the project didn't turn out very well and the artist soon left to Paris. Later, the artist and sculptor kept coming back to Kaunas to visit his parents and frequented the famous bohemian Konrado café where he painted many portraits of its guests.

Neemija escaped the war by moving to the States and subsequently receiving the US citizenship. His mother died in Stutthof concentration camp. His father survived Dachau and later contacted his son with the help of Pablo Picasso. In 1980 a composition of seven bronze bas-reliefs by Arbit Blatas was installed in the Venice Ghetto as a memorial to the victims of Holocaust. The fourth edition of the series was donated by his widow as part of the consecration of the memorial at the Ninth Fort in 2003.

12 LEAH GOLDBERG (1911-1970)

Schwabe Hebrew Gymnasium (now Vocational training centre), Karalius Mindaugo pr. 11

"My homeland – land of beauty and poverty. / The queen has no home, the king has no crown. / There are seven spring days in the year / And cold and rain all the rest", says the first verse of a poem "From the songs of my beloved land" by Leah Goldberg, or Leja Goldbergaite, as the memorial plaque on the former Schwabe Hebrew Gymnasium states.

Born in 1911 to a Jewish family from Kaunas, she learned Hebrew at a young age and began keeping a diary when she was 10, in which she once stated being a writer was her only objective. After graduating from the Schwabe Hebrew Gymnasium in 1928, she entered the Lithuanian University and then continued her studies in Germany. In 1935, Goldberg and her mother settled in Tel Aviv where she became one of the most prominent people in cultural circles and, by translating many classical works into Hebrew, became an unofficial ambassador of the European culture.

The Schwabe Hebrew Gymnasium was established in 1927 by a prominent educator Moshe Schwabe. Among its students was the Holocaust historian Dov Levin (1925-2016).

13 CHAIM NACHMAN ŠAPIRO (1894–1943)

Kaunas Jewish Realgymnasium, Kęstučio g. 85

The son of Chief Rabbi of Lithuania Avraham Dubar Šapiro (1870-1943), became the head of the Semiology department of the Kaunas university in 1926. He was also the teacher in the Jewish Realgymnasium, established in 1915. A new building of the school, one of the most modern in Lithuania at the time, financed by the state and private philanthropist, designed by Baruch Kling, was opened in 1931. The painter Arbit Blatas and writer Jelin Chaim were among its students.

14 RABBI ZALMAN OSOVSKY Jurbarko g.

The white-tiled house next to the bus stop on Jurbarko g. is where the Rabbi of Slabodka, Rav Zalman Osovsky, very popular among the youth, lived.

15 MOISHE HOFMEKLER (1898–1965)

Former "Metropolis" restaurant, now "Charlie Pizzzo", Laisvės al. 68

The family of musicians moved to Kaunas from occupied Vilnius in early 1920s. One of the brothers, Moische, became the leader of the "Metropolis" restaurant orchestra. Danielius Dolskis and many other famous singers performed with the "Metropolis" orchestra; the concerts were broadcast live on the radio (launched in Kaunas in 1926) on weekend nights.

16 DANIEL POMERANZ (1904–1981)

Former "Konradas" café, now "Vero Café", Laisvės al. 51

The jazz ensemble led by the violinist Daniel Pomeranz, a student of the Berlin Conservatoire, was the most popular swing orchestra in what was called the "little stage" of interwar Kaunas. The band usually performed at the "Konradas" café (named by its owners, Leonidas and Maksas Konradas), the hottest bohemian spot in town. They recorded 11 shellac plates for the British label "Columbia".

During the Nazi occupation Pomeranz was imprisoned in Kaunas Ghetto where he formed the orchestra together with Moische Hofmekler. The violinist was later transferred to Dachau and came back to Kaunas after the war, to perform again in the same Konradas café, renamed to Tulpe, before he immigrated to Canada. His daughter, Dana Pomerancaitė, was saved from the Ghetto by the family of Kipras Petrauskas (read the story below).

17 AVRAHAM TORY (1909-2002)

Former Kaunas University, now Kaunas University of Technology, A. Mickevičiaus g. 39

Born as Avraham Golubas in Lazdijai, Tory emigrated to the US only to come back in 1933 and receive a law degree in the Kaunas university and later work there. In the Kaunas Ghetto, he, serving as secretary of the Jewish Council of Elders, wrote a meticulous diary detailing three years of Nazi rule. The diary was later used as evidence in war crimes trials. I am hiding in this crate what I have written, noted and collected, with thrill and anxiety, so that it may serve as material evidence accusing testimony when the Day of Judgment comes", he wrote in the notebooks before burying them. Tory escaped the ghetto with his future wife, Pinna Sheinzon, and managed to recover the hidden notebooks after the war. His book "Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary" was first published in Hebrew in 1998.

18 ESTHER LURIE (1913-1998)

The Memorial of the Kaunas Ghetto Gate, Linkuvos g. / A. Kriščiukaitis g.

Born in Liepaja, Latvia, the artist Esther Lurie emigrated to Palestine in 1934 but continued to return to the Baltic States to exhibit her works. The 2nd World War broke out while she was in Lithuania. The artist survived the Kaunas Ghetto and Stutthof concentration camp, and so did her works created during the time in the Ghetto. One of the many drawings she did was the one of the Kaunas Ghetto Gate. A memorial was erected there after the war. The artist returned to Israel in July 1945.

19 EPHRAIM OSHRY (1914–2003)

The Memorial of the Kaunas Ghetto Gate, Linkuvos g. / A. Kriščiukaitis g.

Oshry was one of the few European rabbis to survive the Holocaust. During his time in the Kaunas Ghetto and concentration camp, he wrote a response regarding the Holocaust which he buried and later retrieved. His book "The Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewry", relates in detail how the Jews were murdered by Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators and also reflects the spiritual life in the ghetto. After the war, he opened a Yeshiva for orphans in Rome and two Yeshivas in New York.

20 JAN ZWARTENDIJK (1886-1976)

Consulate of the Netherlands, Laisvės al. 42

A memorial plaque installed on the facade of the building states the Consulate of The Netherlands was operating here until 1928. The interesting fact is that in 1940, when a Dutch Jan Zwartendijk became the consul it operated in the office of PHILIPS company in Laisvės al. 29. In the three weeks of summer of 1940, Zwartendijk wrote up over 2400 de facto visas to Curaçao and therefore saved thousands of Jews by helping them escape the country. Many whom he helped only knew him as "Mr Philips Radio" or "Angel of Curaçao". His story is closely tied to the one of Chiune Sugihara but the two most probably never even met. Zwartendijk returned to the Netherlands and lived in Eindhoven until his death in 1976. The Righteous Among the Nations was bestowed on him in 1997.

21 CHIUNE SUGIHARA (1900-1986)

The Sugiara House, Vaiganto g. 30
Metropolis Hotel, S. Daukanto g.
Kaunas Railway Station, M. K. Čiurlionio g.

The Japanese Consul-General Chiune Sugihara signed a few thousands life visas and therefore saved numerous lives of Jewish people in the wake of the Second World War. The consulate building is now a small (extension planned in near future) yet extremely popular museum that was opened in 2000. As the Japanese Consulate was closed due to the first Soviet occupation, Sugihara moved to the Metropolis Hotel and continued to sign life visas there. He managed to sign the last few dozens of life visas and save lives of those running from Holocaust while physically boarding the train in the Kaunas railway station.

22 KAZYS GRINIUS and KRISTINA GRINIUVIENĖ

Historical Presidential Palace, Vilniaus g. 33

Kazys Grinius was the third and the last democratically elected President of the first Republic of Lithuania. He left office after a coup d'état by Antanas Smetona and subsequently removed himself from public life. Grinius refused to collaborate with the Nazis. His family helped Dmitri Gelpen, the deputy chairman of the Kaunas ghetto partisan organization, hide in their home before they escaped to the West when the Soviet army reoccupied Lithuania in 1944.

More about Grinius and the First Republic of Lithuania can be learned in the museum of the Historical Presidential Palace. The palace itself was built in mid-19th century and later rented out to the Kaunas Governorate by a local merchant Solomon Feinberg. After declaring the Independence, the first President of Lithuania was elected in Kaunas in 1919 as the capital was moved here from occupied Vilnius.

23 KIPRAS PETRAUSKAS and ELENA PETRAUSKIENĖ

M. and K. Petrauskas Museum of Lithuanian Music, K. Petrausko g. 31

The tenor opera singer was a massively – a street was given his name while he was still living on it – popular person of the provisional capital. In the spring of 1942, he and his wife Elena Petrauskiene were asked to provide shelter for a six-month old daughter of Daniel Pomeranz, a famous violin player and orchestra conductor. The baby was smuggled from the Ghetto and the Petrauskas family soon left the country for safety reasons. Dana Pomeranz met her parents again when the Petrauskas family got back to Lithuania in 1947. Like her father, she became a violinist. On August 2, 1999, Yad Vashem recognized Kipras Petrauskas and his wife as Righteous Among the Nations.

24 PETRAS BAUBLYS

Children Hospital of Kaunas Clinics, Lopselio g. 10

In the 1940s, Petras Baulbys served as the general manager of an orphanage, located in the same part of Kaunas as the ghetto. Between 1942 and 1944, the orphanage was used as a temporary place of refuge for Jewish children before they were moved to safer locations. Tens of babies were admitted into the orphanage while only a few trusted members of the staff were aware of the activities. Baulbys, a gifted and very popular paediatrician, tragically died in a plane crash in 1973 and was posthumously recognized as Righteous Among the Nations in 1977. A memorial plaque is installed on the hospital building on Lopselio g. where the orphanage once was.

25 SOFIJA BINKIENĖ and KAZYS BINKIS

Vydūno al. 45

Sofija Binkienė (1902-1984) was a translator and a journalist, she also assisted her husband, a famous Lithuanian writer Kazys Binkis. During the WW2, their flat on Vydūno g. 45 was unofficially called "The Jewish Hotel" as she helped many people to hide there and actively searched for other safe places. Binkienė encouraged the cultural elite of Kaunas to do the same. In 1967, Binkienė was one of the first Lithuanians to be recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. In the same year, she published a collection of memoirs of the Holocaust survivors called "Unarmed Fighters".

THE PLACES

26 SLABODKA YESHIVA

Danerių k. 51

As Kaunas became the centre of enter of Jewish cultural activity in Lithuania, The Slabodka Yeshiva was opened in 1849 by Yusrael Salanter after he moved here from Wilna to spread the ideas of Musar. In 1897, the Yeshiva was divided into two, he followers of Musar established the Knesses Yisrael Yeshiva, named after Rabbi, while its opponents founded the Knesset Beit Yitzchak Yeshiva, named after Rabbi Spektor. A 1924 edict requiring enlistment in the military or supplementary secular studies in the Yeshiva led a large number of students in the Slabodka Yeshiva to relocate to Palestine. The Slabodka Yeshiva ceased operation during the first Soviet occupation. Its new building had been just finished but was never used for the original reason. Instead, Soviets opened a factory there after the war.

27 CHORAL SYNAGOGUE

E. Ūžeskiėnės g. 13

Before the Holocaust, there were more than 35 Jewish houses of prayer in Kaunas; the first known was demolished in 1916 but soon rebuilt. The Choral Synagogue is right now the only functioning in Kaunas and one of the two in Lithuania. The construction of the synagogue was funded by a local first-guild merchant Lewin Boruch Minkowski. The building of Baroque Revival style was completed in 1872. A memorial to the estimated 50,000 Jewish children killed during the Holocaust can be found in the courtyard. There's a permanent exposition of Rabbi portraits on the second floor of the synagogue.

28 HASIDIC SYNAGOGUE

Gimnazijos g. 6

The synagogue was built around 1880. In the past decades, it was used as sculpture workshops of the Vilnius Academy of Arts Faculty of Kaunas but is now abandoned and its condition gets worse with every winter.

29 ŽALIAKALNIS SYNAGOGUE

Vaisių k. 30

The Žaliakalnis Synagogue, established in 1838 and later rebuilt, was converted into a loft-style photography studio and events space a few years ago. It can be visited or rented out for a private event upon request.

30 JEWISH BANK

Now Lithuanian Zoological Museum, Laisvės al. 106 / Ūžeskiėnės g.

What was once one of the most beautiful buildings on the Laisvės alėja, with a charming passage in front, is now – almost – gone. As the facade of the bank was demolished during the Soviet occupation in order to build a new museum there, the back wall of it still exists – you are able to easily note the year of the construction, 1924, on top of a white wall on Ūžeskiėnės street.

31 OZE HEALTH HOUSE

Now Kaunas Sports Medicine Center, D. Poškos g. 1

The building was erected in 1926 for the needs of OZE, the Society for the Protection of the Health of the Jewish Population, and is one of the great examples of how the members of Jewish community took care of those in need. The design of the building compiles the characters of modernism and art deco and is quite unique in the architectural landscape of Kaunas, adding value to it.

37 NINTH FORT

Žemaičių pl. 73

In 1882, the Russian Empire started to build a first-class fortress complex in Kaunas. The Ninth fort was finished in 1913. It was practically undamaged during the WWI. From 1924 on, the Ninth Fort was used as the Kaunas City prison. During the Soviet occupation of 1940-1941, it was used to house political prisoners before they were transferred to forced labour camps. During the Nazi occupation, the area near the fort was a place of mass murder. At least 50 thousand people, mostly Jews taken from the Kaunas Ghetto, were killed here by Nazis and local collaborators. A museum was established here in 1958. A 32 m high memorial to the victims of Nazism, designed by Alfonsas Vincentas Ambraziūnas, Gediminas Baravykas and Vytautas Vie-lius, was erected here in 1984. Today, The Ninth Fort museum contains collections of historical artefacts related both to Soviet atrocities and the Nazi genocide, as well as materials related to the earlier history of Kaunas and Ninth Fort. Please note that the museum is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

38 ALEKSOTAS JEWISH CEMETERY

H. ir O. Minkowskių k.

Squeezed between the Aleksotas slope and "Kauno grūdų" factory, this is the only active Jewish cemetery in Kaunas today. Remains were transferred here from the Ghetto cemetery in Vilijampolė in 1978.

39 VILJAMPOLĖ JEWISH CEMETERY

Kalnių g.

The oldest cemetery in Kaunas dates back to 17th century. It was eradicated during the Soviet occupation and some of the remains were transferred to the Aleksotas cemetery but there are still some grave-stones out there, surrounded by trees on the hill in the northern part of what used to be the cemetery.

40 ŽALIAKALNIS JEWISH CEMETERY

Radvilėnų pl.

Situated near the Ažuolynas park, this is the largest and most important Jewish cemetery in Kaunas, established in 1861 and closed in 1952. Singer Danielius Dolskis, painter Yakov Mesenblum, Jewish Independence fighters and a lot of other memorable people were buried there. After many years of neglecting the cemetery and letting it reach a terrible state, actual revival works on the site started in 2015. In 2016, the students of Vytautas Magnus University have documented almost 6 thousand graves in the cemetery – the digital project will be available online in the near future.

41 PANEMUNĖ JEWISH CEMETERY

Vaidoto g.

Located on the left bank of the Nemunas River in the resort-like Panemunė neighbourhood, this is the smallest out of the four Jewish cemeteries in Kaunas, established in 1710. Only three gravesites are visible as all of the others are buried deep in the ground.

42 YARD GALLERY

E. Ūžeskiėnės g. 21

After moving into a house on E. Ūžeskiėnės street, a Lithuanian artist Vytenis Jakas discovered numerous stories of its previous residents, Litvaks that lived here before the Holocaust. The stories became the basis for a street art gallery – the pictures of former residents were transferred on the facades of the houses – and helped form a new ever-growing community of those living here today.

43 STOLDERSTEINE

Laisvės al. 1, Triško g. 1, Darbininkų g. 15, Vydūno al. 67

The art project of the world's largest decentralized memorial was initiated by the German artist Gunter Demnig in 1992 and is still ongoing. It commemorates individual persons at their last places of residency or work before they perished during the Holocaust. In summer of 2016, the first stoldersteine, literally "stumbling stones" were installed in Lithuania. You are invited to find the stones in the place of the cycling track where Iškakas Anolikas, the first Lithuanian Olympian, trained, in front of an art studio where Cėrnė Percikovičiūtė learned to paint, in front of the house of Dr. Vladimiras Lazersonas and his wife Regina Lazersonienė, in front of a house where the painter Jakovas Lipsčas lived before he was moved to Kaunas Ghetto where he drew together with Esther Lurie.

44 KAUNAS STATE ARCHIVE

Maironio g. 28B

The modern building stands on the basement of a former synagogue that was closed during the occupation after it was decided everyone should use the Choral Synagogue. Head here to research the documents of the property of Kaunas residents nationalised by the Soviet occupants.

45 THE BUTCHERS SYNAGOGUE

M. Daukšos g. 27

Built in the 19th century and nationalised during the Soviet occupation, the building is now the ceramics and textile workshop of Vilnius Art Academy Kaunas Art Faculty.

