

A PERSON BEHIND EVERY NUMBER

The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes Committed by the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania and Yad Vashem, the International School for Holocaust Studies in Israel, organized the international internship "Learning and Teaching about the Holocaust" in Jerusalem from 2 to 10 August. The workshop was coordinated by Yad Vashem's employee Noa Sigal. The participants from Lithuania were supervised by Ingrida Vilkienė, coordinator of educational programs at the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes Committed by the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania. A group of twenty people from Lithuanian general education schools and museums took part in the workshop. At the same time, educational staff from the UK and Romania were developing their competencies at Yad Vashem in parallel classrooms.

The internship program was well-designed, interesting, intensive, and effective. The training and lectures were given by a wide range of professionals in their respective fields: Dr. Zeev Dachevsky gave a charismatic insight into the religious aspects of the history of the Jewish people; Dr. Arkadiy Zeltser spoke about the peculiarities of Jewish life in the former Soviet Union before World War II (before World War I, the territory of Tsarist Russia was home to the world's largest Jewish community of some 3.1 million Jews); Dr. Ilya Lurie addressed the structure of the Jewish community since the Middle Ages and its impact on contemporary communities; Dr. Daniel Romanovsky analyzed the phenomenon of the emergence of anti-Semitism (from the Middle Ages to the rise of the Nazis in Germany); Dr. Linas Venclauskas lectured on "Anti-Semitism in Lithuania," looking at the possibilities of identity construction and the ideology of anti-Semitism; lecturer Sasha Vindischanskaja presented the music composed in ghettos and death camps.

Lecturer Masha Pollak Rozenberg spoke about the peculiarities and problems of the Israeli education system and the methodology of teaching the Holocaust in her country. Lecturers Noa Sigal, Anna Rinenberg, and Olga Duke demonstrated how to creatively use the visual material collected at Yad Vashem (exhibitions, feature films, documentaries, recordings (survivors' testimonies, reflections of specialists in various fields), etc.). Lecturer Masha Yonin presented the specifics of the work of the Yad Vashem Archive and the use of modern technologies in the research of the collected material.

The participants had a unique opportunity to meet a Holocaust survivor, Mrs. Rivka Kahane. A bright, elderly woman, she shared her memories of the difficult times. She referred to a popular Hebrew saying: "Who saves one soul saves the whole world."

Lecturers Noa Sigal, Stas Frankin, and Sofia Osminskina presented the unique exhibitions of the Yad Vashem complex (the History Museum, the Hall of Remembrance, the Art Hall, the Research Centre, the Children's Memorial (1.5 million children were killed during the Holocaust), etc.) and the synagogue.

Accompanied by a very bright guide, Rosa Zlatopolsky, the group visited the Israel Museum, one of the best art and archaeological museums in the world, the Old City of Jerusalem, Masada

('fortress' in Hebrew) built by Herod, the Jordan River, the Dead Sea. Our guide, Olga Djuk, took us through the memorable museum of Theodor Herzl (founder of modern political Zionism).

During the Holocaust (1933-1945), about 6 million Jews were exterminated. Approximately 4.8 million names have been identified, dossiers have been compiled, some even include their occupations, and some have photographs.

In the context of endless human catastrophes, it is vital to be aware that there is a human being behind every number. A uniqueness. A dream. A story.

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