



Atklātais sabiedriskais fonds "Liepājas ebreju mantojums"

Liepāja Jewish Heritage Foundation



❖ *We express sincere appreciation and gratitude to our donors :*

- *Selwyn and Raymond Haas and families;*
- *Late Sheila Johnson Robbins; Prof. George Schwab;*
- *The Uniting History Foundation and its team;*
- *The Jewish Survivors of Latvia (U.S.A.);*
- *Barbara Lau;*
- *Jevgenij Ratgauz and Olga Novak and families;*
- *Henry Blumberg.*

❖ We are grateful to our colleagues and partners who actively participated in our work :

- Rita Bogdanova, member of the Board of the Liepāja Jewish Heritage Foundation;
- Anna Petrova, Chair of the Liepāja Jewish Community Board,
- Marina Gudkova, Deputy Chair,
- Lena Sazonova and Viktor Anderson, members of the Board.

❖ We send our best wishes for a year of health to our entire Liepāja Jewish Community and to Libau descendants all over the world, along with our wishes for success and fulfillment.

Message from the Chairman of the Board and Director

On behalf of the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation ("Liepājas ebreju mantojums") we are pleased to present our 2021 Annual Report which provides a summary of our initiatives and activities.

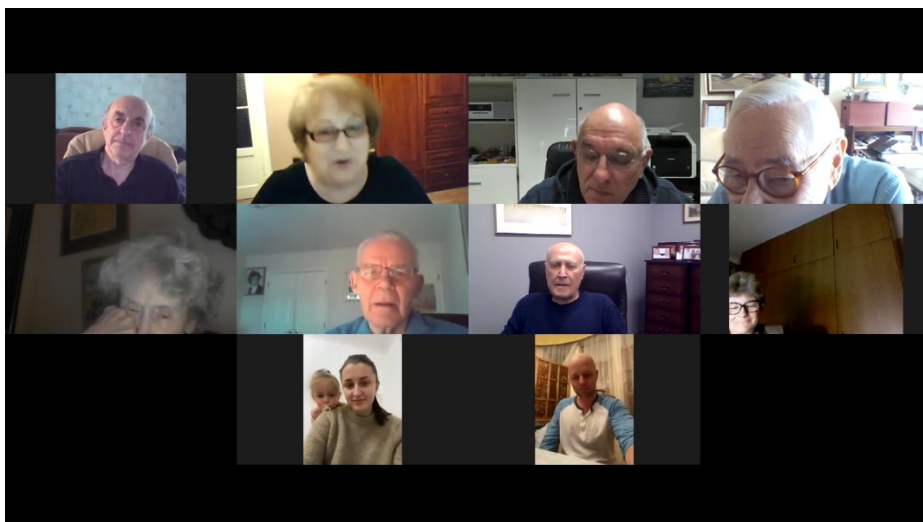
1. We began the year hopeful that the unusual challenges presented in 2020 by the global pandemic would soon be in the rearview mirror. However, the reality of 2021 forced us adapt to the ongoing pandemic conditions.
2. While the Community has not been immune to these difficulties we have seen a resilience in the individuals that constitute our members to become considerate of each other and to appreciate every opportunity to meet in person.
3. The Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation was forced rethink how to improve and mobilize our work to ensure the continuation of projects, programs, social services and funding.
4. We worked side by side with the Liepaja Jewish Community Board.
5. One of our tasks was to enrich life of the Jewish Community members, their families and children and provide educational, cultural, and social assistance.
6. Permanent social assistance arranged by the Uniting History Foundation has improved the lives of Community members in need and families affected most by this pandemic.
7. We launched new initiatives, as well as assisted with Jewish family research, assisting many people of the Jewish origin to find their roots and become members of the Liepaja Jewish Community. 19 new members joined the Community between 2019 -2021.
8. Through Jewish heritage research, education and Holocaust Remembrance Jewish values, goals, traditions and connections are being preserved for current and future generations.
9. During the year of 2021 we maintained contact with the descendants of Liepaja/Libau Jews from many countries worldwide and continued with the initiative to meet in 2022 at the World Reunion of Liepaja/Libau Jewry.
10. Thinking ahead, post-pandemic, we consider that among our tasks, the following should feature in relation to the Liepaja Jewish Community sustainability and engagement :
 - attract new members to the Community by assisting them with the Jewish roots research program;
 - help the Jewish Community of Liepaja to develop as an open, connected, and vibrant Jewish peoplehood that cares for each other, fosters Jewish learning, traditions and its heritage, and acts as a focal point of good deeds to the wider world;
 - ensure families with young children connect with each other and with Jewish life in innovative and engaging ways.

George Schwab – 90

There are not many Liepaja Jewish Survivors still living. George Schwab is one of them and is still active, motivating and supporting initiatives of the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation including Holocaust studies, Jewish traditions and the Jewish heritage of Liepaja.

George Schwab, a founding member of the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation, and an active participant of all our projects marked his 90th anniversary on 25 November 2021 "Mazel Tov!".

We surprised George with an online meeting to congratulate him on this significant date and send our appreciation to him for all his activity, his life to record our respect for him.



One of our highlights in 2021 was the launch of the photobook **Лиепāja Либава Libau** which work started in 2018.

The photobook is available in Latvian, English, Russian and German.

It contains 258 photographs of Liepaja taken by several photographers before WWII. These pictures guide us through pre-War Liepaja, a city of endless charm and warmth, with its long beach of white sand, the movie houses, the museum, the opera house that doubled as a theater, the hotels, cafes, shops, and the beautifully maintained parks.

It is dedicated to the people of Liepaja (Liepājnieki), who have built and developed their hometown, our hometown, for the benefit of the present and future generations.



Creative Group

Elita Balčus, Uldis Baltutis, Ilana Ivanova, Inga Ronče Kirils Bobrovs, Gunars Silakaktiņš

➤ The Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation activities in 2021 focused on the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of WWII and the Holocaust in Latvia and the mass extermination of Liepaja Jews.

This section of our Annual report contains descriptions of the projects and programs, planned and implemented in 2021. Some research-related projects are long-term and will continue until we achieve the anticipated goals.

I. RESEARCH PROJECTS	
1.	Otto Fischer Research started in 2020
1.1.	We collected more information and documents on the life of Otto Fischer, <i>an Austrian National team football player, a prominent coach of the Liepaja Olimpija football team.</i> <i>Killed in Liepaja in July 1941.</i>
1.2.	We investigated the fate of his siblings.
1.3.	All findings were published on the Foundation website: www.liepajajewishheritage.lv
2.	Nison Kacnelson Research started in 2020
2.1.	An online lecture was given about this outstanding person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>member of the First Duma of Russian Empire,</i> - <i>delegate of the Third Zionist congress,</i> - <i>elected Director of the Jewish Colonial Trust,</i> - <i>friend of Dr. Theodor Herzl, Zionist.</i>
2.2.	New and more detailed documentation has been attached to the Foundation's website, including special information about the residence of Kacnelson in Liepāja at No.16 Kūrmājas prospect.
3.	Liepaja Rabbis
3.1.	We collected more information about Rabbis of Liepaja and unknown facts about the Liepāja Great Choral synagogue. We have received three new photographs related to destruction of the synagogue in July 1941. Information is available on the Foundation's website.
3.2.	We found 4 graves of Rabbis in the Liepaja Jewish Cemetery which need to be restored.
4.	Liepaja Ghetto
4.1.	We made a list of the pre-war tenants and owners of the houses that were used as Liepaja ghetto premises.
4.2.	We started a detailed description of the daily lives of the Liepaja ghetto prisoners, based on the available printed material and reminiscences of the Survivors recorded and collected at Yad Vashem.
4.3.	We are in the process of identifying the place in Liepaja where the remaining Jews of ghetto were loaded on carriages and transported to Keizerwald on 8 October, 1943.
5.	Saviours of Jews in Liepaja and Liepaja area
5.1.	This project has been taken over by Maija Meiere Oše, a historian from the Žanis Lipke Memorial. We shared our knowledge and

	collected materials and support with the information or documents or contacts with descendants of Survivors.
6.	Liepāja/Libau Jewish family roots
6.1.	We assisted 12 Liepāja Jewish descendants with the family research, including clarification of historical facts, searches for addresses, former properties and businesses etc. in Liepāja.
6.2.	With Rita Bogdanova's help, we found numerous documents and information about the Kiršteins-Ridnik family history. The family knew little about their ancestors. Thanks to our support and participation in research, the family tree is almost finished. This research helped 4 people to become members of the Liepāja Jewish Community.
6.3.	This kind of research helped us expand the Liepāja Jewish descendants' database to 149 individuals from 17 countries.
II.	EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS
1.	Liepāja Jewish Heritage
1.1.	We started a weekly, free on-line thematic lecture cycle. The main goal of these lectures was to provide information about Jewish heritage of Liepāja. It included unknown Holocaust facts; general information about the development of the city and the huge contribution of Jews to its economy, construction, culture, sports, education including the influence of the Jewish community on all aspects of the city's life during the period from the beginning of the 18th century to the outbreak of World War II.
1.2.	We held 26 Zoom meetings. More than 57 guests participated not only from the Liepāja Jewish Community, but also Liepāja guides, academics and Liepāja descendants from Riga, Moscow, Israel, Germany and the USA.
1.3.	George Scwab, Ivar Brod, Eli Valk, Ilya Lensky from Museum Jews in Latvia, Maija Meijere Oše, from Ž. Lipke Memorial Museum in Riga were our guest speakers. We were welcomed by Arkadij Suharenko, the President of the Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia, who welcomed online conference participants on Hanukkah.
1.4.	Some lectures were recorded and will be available on the Foundation's website by June 2022.
2.	Jewish Traditions and Religion
2.1.	Since the beginning of pandemic restrictions we have organized online connections with 49 members of the Community and 15 participants

	from Latvia and other countries.
2.2.	We provided technical support to Community members and taught the online conference participants how to use online connection.
2.3.	We supported 50 Tora readings of Shabbat chapters led by Eduard Kaplan. When gatherings in the Community were permitted, participants of Tora readings had meals for the second Seder.
2.4.	The traditional art exhibition of Eduard Kaplan dedicated to his 80th anniversary was presented at his private apartment due to the pandemic restrictions. It was a new experience for all the participants of the online meeting. Eduard introduced us to his new works and made a retrospective over the pictures he has drawn during previous years.
2.5.	We started a new project 'My Non-Latvian Jewish Roots'. This project opens new pages of the history of the members of the Jewish Community who arrived to Liepaja after WWII. 8 speakers and members of the Community, shared reminiscences about their families, how they survived the Holocaust and they spoke about the Jewish life of places they originated from.
3.	Jewish history, Holocaust studies and rescue of Jews
3.1	Whenever we speak about the Holocaust and victims of Jewish genocide our policy is to speak about those non-Jews who saved Jews,
3.2.	Since 2014, when the Righteous Gentiles Alley was dedicated in Šķēde, tragic stories of the ruthless extermination of Jews run parallel to the amazing ones of salvation by courageous non-Jews.
3.3.	Maija Meijere Oše, one of the researchers of cases of salvation of Jews, presented interesting facts during our Zoom conference about the rescue of Jews in Liepaja and the Liepaja area.
III.	COMMEMORATION EVENTS, Holocaust Remembrance Days
1.	On 28, January, 2021 a special lecture was given about little known Holocaust facts. Ilana Ivanova spoke about the origins of genocide and why the Holocaust affected every person on Earth. She also spoke about orchestras in concentration camps and the fate of musicians and their instruments.
2.	On May 8-9, we marked Victory Day over Fascism on the Zoom platform with a lecture about Jewish soldiers and participation of Jew in

	WWI and WWII.
3.	On July 1, an online meeting was dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Holocaust in Latvia and the upcoming Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Genocide of the Jewish People in Latvia on July 4, 2021. During the meeting the Holocaust chronology in Liepaja was discussed.
4.	Commemoration of Jewish soldiers who fought for Latvian independence On 18 November, on Latvia's Independence Day there was a small commemoration meeting organized by the Board of the Jewish Community and supported by the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation.
	➤ December 15-17, 2021
	" Liepājas ebreju mantojums ' Foundation and the Liepāja Jewish Community, in cooperation with Žanis Lipke Memorial and museum "Jews in Latvia' organized commemorative activities on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the mass extermination of Jews of Liepāja in 1941.
5.	15 December A commemorative ceremony in the presence of Rabbi Ilya Krumer and the new Ambassador of the State of Israel to Latvia was held in Šķēde at the Memorial to Liepaja Jews - Victims of the Holocaust. 1941-1945.
6.	15 December - 5.p.m. Jewish Community members, their family members, Liepāja residents and guests lit candles at the Memorial Wall on the Jewish cemetery to commemorate victims of the Holocaust of Liepāja.
7.	17 December An online meeting with Holocaust research experts took place for history researchers, teachers, fans. On behalf of the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation and as a child of Liepaja Jewish survivors Ilana Ivanova spoke about her perception of the Holocaust and how historical memory influenced her life. <i>(Available on the Žanis Lipke Memorial Facebook page and on the website www.lipke.lv).</i>
IV.	PUBLISHING/PRINTING
1.	Photobook Liepāja Либава Libau We have published 500 copies of the Photobook Liepāja Либава Libau after 3 years of hard work with a team of enthusiasts and professionals. The book is available for sale in the office of the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation at 21 Kungu St in Liepāja from March 1, 2022

2.	<p>The Death of Jews, by Nadine Fresco (<i>describes 8 photographs of extermination of Liepaja Jews in Šķēde on 15 December, 1941</i>).</p> <p>After the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation published the book in Russian and Latvian, it was translated and published in English in 2021 and is available for sale on the internet.</p>
3.	<p>Memories of Prof. George Schwab Odyssey of a Child Survivor were translated from English into Russian by Ivar Brod. With participation and support of Alex Zaharjin, the Chairman of the Liepāja Jewish Heritage Foundation’s Board, his reminiscences were published.</p>
V.	<p>SUPPORT OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, ITS PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS</p>
	<p>➤ In 2021 the Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation aimed to provide the Jewish Community of Liepaja (as one of our projects) essential assistance in all areas of its activities. This included different opportunities for people who might be feeling vulnerable and isolated missing their friends and Community colleagues.</p>
	<p>➤ To remain up-to-date and provide information about coming events, we started a phone chain where volunteers made hundreds of calls as well as sending out more than 50 mailings per event.</p>
1.	<p>New Club Room</p> <p>The Liepaja Jewish Heritage Foundation and Uniting History donated funds for the renovation and refurbishment of the Club Room (former Lounge) at the Jewish Community. The key with our gift plaque was handed to the Board of the Jewish Community for the benefit of all members of the Community.</p>
2.	<p>Capital Investments</p> <p>Together with the Uniting History Foundation we have co-invested considerable funds to help the Jewish Community Board continue the renovation, reconstruction and refurbishments of its premises. All work was finished by 01 September 2021.</p>
3.	<p>Jewish Holidays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together with the Liepāja Jewish Community Board we organized and co-financed the following Jewish Holidays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Purim, *Passover, *Rosh *Hashanah, *Sukkot, *Yom Kippur, *Hanukkah. • We were happy to organize Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah outdoors

	<p>events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Purim and Passover 156 gift parcels have been delivered to Jewish Community members. • We are grateful to Uniting History Foundation for their support of the Rosh Hashanah celebration, which included a high-class performance of Klezmer band and the opera Diva Sonora Voice.
4.	<p>Children & young families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liepāja Jewish Heritage Foundation co-financed English classes for children of the Jewish Community. • We co-financed gift parcels for children provided by the Jewish Community Board on Jewish holidays. • 25 children received special gift cards to buy winter clothes and school equipment. This project was donated by Barbara Lau from Munich, a close friend of the Foundation and the Jewish Community.
VI.	QR CODE PLAQUES
1.	<p>We installed QR code plaques on 5 Jewish memorials :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Two in Šķēde – on information stands about the Memorial to Liepāja Jews, victims of the Holocaust and the Righteous Gentiles Alley; ➤ on the memorial stele dedicated to the Liepāja Great Choral Synagogue; ➤ on the memorial plaque near the lighthouse; ➤ on the memorial stone in former ghetto area.
2.	<p>The QR codes are adjusted to related pages of the Liepāja Jewish Heritage Foundation website, where the user can find information about the memorial and events that occurred during the Holocaust</p>
VII.	ONGOING PROJECTS
1.	The Jewish cemetery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ According to the Jewish cemetery register books there are 3564 names. The last death recorded was on 21 June 1941. There are unique and valuable collections of sepulchral art. 90% of burials have no descendants due to the Holocaust, and a few arrive in Liepāja from time to time to investigate burials of their ancestors and then repair, restore or erect a new

	gravestone.
1.	Together with the Uniting History Foundation we provide regular clean-up of the cemetery. This work is complicated due to old fences surrounding many of the gravestones. This work is attended to almost the whole year round.
2.	We commenced a global research of burials, analyzing monuments and special gravestones from an historical and architectural point of view. Our intention is to obtain a special status for the old part of the Jewish cemetery from the State authorities. We intend to apply for the status of "historical cultural heritage of the Jewish minority of Latvia".
3.	We found 4 burials of Liepaja Rabbis that are in a bad condition. We undertook some preservation works to minimize further destruction of them.
4.	When digitalization of cemeteries in Latvia started we found that according to the new plan of burials Sector A was missing with many of the burials not recorded from previous years. We carried out an inventory of this sector and have evidence of the gradual disappearance of Jewish burials in sector A. As soon as the pandemic restrictions are eased we shall meet the city authorities from the City Cemetery department.
2	Šķēde Memorial Complex
1.	In 2021 we undertook the clean-up of the Šķēde Memorial area. We restored the road surface to the Memorial and the parking lot, as over the past 15 years the open-hearth surface which had eroded.
2.	Before special commemoration events extra work was organized to clean and wash all stone parts of the Memorials.
3	Because of the danger of the sea coast erosion, the Šķēde Memorial is threatened. The City authorities have decided to construct a boom (groin) into the sea which should shore up the coastline. In autumn we ceased the cleaning works, except for collecting garbage. In December a big clean-up activity took place before the commemoration events dedicated to the 80th anniversary of extermination of Jews in Šķēde.

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