

Workshop “Ten Commandments“ – telecasts on on Holocaust theme, made in Estonia and Lithuania by the firm Adel TV, broadcasted in Life TV and TV Network in Estonia, world-wide TV Channel TBN, and demonstrated in Jewish and Christian conferences in Estonia and Lithuania – a new approaches in teaching Holocaust

Leader of discussion: Irina Stelmach

Programme „**Ten Commandments**“ is the serie of six telecasts, 28 minutes long each. Three of them were made in Estonia and another three are made in Lithuania during 2004.

In my workshop I will present fragments from two of them – Holocaust of the citizens of Estonian Republic, who were inhabitants of the small and beautiful resort **Pärnu**, located in Baltic sea in the South of Estonia, near Latvian border, and Holocaust of the citizens of Lithuania – two Vilnius ghetto, Daugjalei and other places.

The telecast from Pärnu is the first research about the Holocaust of Pärnu Jews in electronic media.

Our guides in Pärnu are Mr. Efim Frisher, the leader of the Jewish Community of Pärnu, Mrs. Asya Hopp, the member of the Jewish Community of Pärnu and Mrs. Piret Udikas, Christian journalist, who made her own investigations and published articles in local newspaper „Pärnu Postimees“ - the oldest newspaper in Estonia - on the theme of Holocaust of Estonian Jews.

We will see the places where Pärnu Jews were murdered – the forest Raeküla not far from Pärnu with the monument for the murdered Jews with comments of Piret Udikas, the stockhouse named Betti Aid in the middle of Pärnu where Jewish women and children were imprisoned for months before they were murdered in the forest Raeküla and where one prisoner was murdered by Estonian guard. We will see the picture from Pärnu Museum of the History - a testimony that the stockhouse was established in the 19-th century by two Jews from London whose last name was Bett. It was a prospering enterprise.

We visit the Pärnu Jewish Cemetery – the monument of 16-th century, where Pärnu Jews were buried during the centuries. We can see how noble people they were. Efim Frisher takes care of them

We will visit the Pärnu Synagogue or better to say the half-burned building, where Jewish children were murdered after being imprisoned there, the hospital opposite the Synagogue from where people who worked in the hospital could hear how bitterly cried Jewish children before being murdered.

We will listen the testimony of the witness of the murder of Jewish children and doctor Hirsh, who wanted to help German patient but was recognized as a Jew. After this doctor Hirsh was never seen in the hospital. All his family – two children, wife and mother disappeared. We can find their names in the list of executed Pärnu Jews.

We will visit Mrs. Asya Hopp, the aunt of Jefim Frisher, who came to Pärnu from Belorussia and married Estonian Jew.

„Estonian Jews all studied in German gymnasiums, they all speak German, they thought: German will never abuse us. We did nothing bad to them. What for? We did nothing bad to them“– can not stop repeating Asya Hopp.

„Nobody could speak any Russian and they were afraid to be evacuated to the Soviet Union after the deportation“, Asya said.

The Estonian Republic which was the one of the first states in Europe who offered Jews the cultural autonomy, could not defend her Jewish citizens, because in 1941 was occupaid – first by Soviets and second by Nazis.

„But if we want to be pure before ourselves and before God, we must admit, that the Holocaust was also made by hands of Estonians“, says Christian journalist and Holocaust explorer Mrs. Piret Udikas.

But our society even today is not ready to admit this fact. Some witnesses who saw the mass murder in Klooga, who saw the mass murder in Raeküla, after giving testimony refuse to repeat this testimonies for taping, says Piret.

Two old ladies who promised to participate in our telecast, refused to participate and never answer for phone calls any more. This is and indicator of the attitude to Holocaust in Estonian society, Piret convinced.

Our telecast in Pärnu finishes in Pärnu Emmanuele Church where the Meeting to support Israel was held. We can see Mr. Joosep Tammo, the leader of Estonian Evangelical churches, the teacher of history and devoted friend of Jewish nation.

His Father, a well-known pastor in Estonia, who`s 100 anniversary was celebrated a year before, occured to be a witness of mass-murder in Kalevi – Liiva, where between 4 000 or 6 000 Jewish people were shot in 1942- 1944, told him when he came back home:

„I saw how Germans murdered Jews. This One Thousand Old Reich do not live long“.

In this telecast we give an theological explanation to Holocaust as a violation of the Ten Commandments. The alternative to them is Death and the all ideologies what try to destroy Ten Commandments bring death not only our nation.

The telecasts made in Estonia were edited in Estonian Christian TV, which owner Mr. Peeter Võsu is a devoted friend of Israel. He is also a director of Estonian branch of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and a manager of Events to protect Israel in Europe and of many trips to Israel for the Estonian groups.

I am planning also to show the fragments from the telecast „Ten Commandments“ made in Lithuania, what is directly talks about Holocaust. Those telecasts were edited

with the support of telecast „Menorah“, what is broadcasted in **Lithuanian State TV** for ten years. The editor is **Mrs. Lilia Kopacz**, the devoted friend of our nation. I am planning to employ her for my next film on Holocaust theme in Latvia.

In the telecast „Ten Commandments“ in Lithuania we meet the young film director Audrius Juzenas, who made a grand feature film „Ghetto“ about the theatre what was established in Vilnius ghetto. The script was made on the base of the internationally well-known play written by Joshua Sobol.

In our telecasts we show the fragments of this outstanding movie.

We interview Audrius and he explains us that for him the work with the film is a struggle for the truth, justice and the dignity of human being as it was for the actors of Vilnius Ghetto Theatre. „You can murder me, but you can't win me. The part of G-d in the person in the strongest one which always win“, told us Audrius Juzenas.

I am happy to say, that this film is completed now despite financial problems and was demonstrated in Vilnius in March 2006.

In this telecast we also meet Mr. Linas Vildzunas, the well-known film critic and explorer, who is also the leader of the project „Jews who were the neighbours of my grandmothers and grandfathers“. Project was directed for schoolchildren who had to investigate the Jewish life in small places of Lithuania before WW2 and tried to find the answer for the question „What for were murdered Lithuanian Jews?“. But they could not find the answer.

In our telecast we show the final reception for the participants of the project who's works were honored as the best by the Ministry of Education.

Project was supported by Ministry of Education of Lithuania. As a result of the investigations a film „The setting in Lithuania“ (3 parts) was made. We show the fragments of this film in our telecast. We can see the witnesses who lived in the same places, where lived Jews and still remember them. They show us where was a Jewish school, a Jewish stock etc.

In our interviews we discuss such a theme as a prevention of genocid, which is still actual today. „Holocaust shows us how simple is to solve a task to murder A huge number of human beings“, told Linas Vildzunas.

In our Lithuanian telecast we also interview the leader of the telecast „Menorah“ Mr. Vitali Karakorskis. The most important project for our theme is the documentary „Rescuers“. We show one of the most touching fragments from the film – the story about Ljuba Chessakov-Funkaite, who now lives in Israel and her Lithuanian Mother Pronja Grigalaitene, who could not see each other since 1948 when Ljuba parents survived from Nazi KZ emigrated to Israel until 1989 when thanks to Perestroika it turned to be possible for Ljuba to come to Lithuania and meet her rescuers. The meeting of Ljuba and her Lithuanian Mother, the whole story how Ljuba was rescued by 5 families is impossible to

watch without tears. „ When I saw how Ljuba embraced the old woman I burst to cry“, told me the editor in chief of Life TV Katerina Rukovitshina.

The main message of this telecast is love and support that people of different origin always offered to each other during difficult times.

Programmes were broadcasted in Estonian „Life TV“, in mega-channel „TBN“ (84 bln. audience), at present time they are in the slot in Estonian Channel TV-Network, what is one of the most popular among Russian speaking population in Estonia.

During 2004 -2005 they were demonstrated for the audience in the framework of events directed to protect Israel and Jewish people in diaspora – in Israel Summer Camp, organized by Estonian friends of Israel during the 2005, in so called „Israel`s evenings“, organized by Evangelical Churches to protect Israel around Estonia.

This winter they were demonstrated for the members of Jewish Religious Community of Estonia and for people who took part in the programmes organized by Sohnut in Baltia.

The telecasts were also demonstrated for the students of Tallinn Jewish School.

This Spring the programmes were demonstrated for the participants of the LIMMUD in Vilnius.

The programmes were also demonstrated in Israel Army for the participants of the programme Sar-El in 2004.

The programmes talk about Jewish life in Estonia and Lithuania, their aim is consolidate diaspora around Jewish State and to inspire friends of Jewish people to protect Israel. In our film we observe Holocaust as violating of Ten Commandments which is the base of Judeo-Christian Civilization.

The sponsors of the project were The Jewish Humanitarian Fond in Netherlands, the Estonian branch of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, the Estonian Christian Television, the Jewish Religious Community of Estonia, the Jewish Museum in Vilnius, the Jewish telecast „Menora“, broadcasted in Lithuanian State Television Channel, the Jewish Community of Lithuania, also the Jewish Community in Latvia and Jewish agency Sohnut in Baltic States.

Themes for discussion

1.

During the struggle for independence Israel was a lighthouse for Baltic States. The new and patriotically orientated politicians admired Israel as state what proclaimed itself as a national state for Jewish people.

Baltic leaders visited Israel seeking for moral and economical support. Israel was ready to help. Thus, Israel armed the Estonian army in the period when no one state in Europe had courage to help even with equipment, even for the police.

But since the time when Baltic States authorities decided to take course for the membership in the European Union, their political attitude to Jewish State changed. Today they try to keep neutrality and be so called „political correct“.

„Political correctness“ needs to admit Holocaust, at least officially. Estonia decided to establish the Day of Holocaust in January 27 as some other European countries do. It was political decision what was made in 2003 under strong pressure of US. The Estonian society reacted on this decision painfully. Even today some Estonian politicians and intellectuals do not want to recognize the fact that Holocaust is part of the history of Estonia.

Estonian officials made great efforts to „improve“ their own decision to celebrate the Day of Holocaust on 27 January. From the comments of ministers of education and science is clear that the Day of Holocaust is devoted not only to Jews murdered by Nazis and their collaborators, but also for the victims of the crimes committed by Soviet regime since 1941 until 1949 and later.

But among more than 10 000 people who were deported to Siberia in 1941 eleven percents (414 person) were Jews – the citizens of the Estonian Republic.

The Day of Holocaust what is celebrated in some countries of Europe as a day to commemorate more than 6 millions Jews, has the official name in Estonia as a Day of Holocausts and another crime against humanity committed in period 1941 until 1949 (when the second deportation to Siberia took place). The Day of Holocaust first was celebrated in Estonia in 2003. Since that time until now the Jewish community of Estonia protests against the name and the ideology of this event, but without any success.

The Day of deportation is celebrated in Estonia on July 14. The Jewish community celebrates this day also by meeting on Tallinn Jewish Cemetery as a Day to remember victims of deportations of Jewish origin. Nobody remember victims of Holocaust this day.

There was only 1,2 percent of Estonian Jews who took part in so called Death Details which were formed by Soviets in 1941. In the textbooks for the Estonian schools we may read, that Nazi`s collaborators wanted to avenge Jews for the participation in the Deaths Detachments. Less than 1000 Estonian Jews who stayed here were murdered totally for three month – between September until November 1941 – were civilians who never took part in the crimes committed by Soviets.

European Jews who found their death in Estonia never took part in the Soviet crime committed in Estonia.

In our telecast „Ten Commannments“ made in Pärnu – the international resort where in the Estonian Republic before Soviet occupation lived the mostly educated and prospering Jewish community – we show the materials from Estonian State Archive.

In the report made by the Security Police is told that there was the only one reason for the execution - the national origin. Our audience may see the word „Jew“ in the column „committed crime“. We can also read, what was the profession of those people. People who committed the crime to be born as a Jew and murdered for this were civilians - schooschildren, workes, teachers enc. The youngest of them was a six month old baby Taube Kushnir. In the column „committed crime“ we may read - „juut, baby“.

In the famous report „Estland sit (NB. Not „ist“ and not „sind“ but just „sit“!) Juden frei“, made by the Security Police in the end of 1941 and sent to Germany is told that Estonian Jews were arrested with the help of domestic antisemites and that efforts to „provoke“ pogroms occurred to be unsuccessful „for the little amount of Jewish population“. „Domestic antisemites“ - not wrestlers for the freedom of Estonia against Soviet occupants“!

Nazi propaganda which accused Jews in the crimes committed by Soviets was actual in Lithuania and Latvia, but Nazis were not active with this propaganda in Estonia for the same reason - the small amount of Jews – about 3 000 before WW2 and between 4 000-5000 before Nazi occupation.

The question about the participation of Jews in the crimes committed by Soviet regime is still painful. Until now Estonians who try to explain the participation in Holocaust as a revenge name two names – Idel Jakobson, the Estonian Jew, who was especially cruel collaborator with Soviets and KGB polkovnik Pasternak, who was Russian Jew, known as cruel Soviet occupant.

Your opinion.

Is it now right time to discuss the accusations of Jews in mass participation in the crime committed by Soviet and other Communist regime since those regimes were accused by the UN this Spring?

I am on the opinion that this is necessary step to take. The explanation the Difference between Holocaust and deportation, what is used by the leaders of the Jewish community of Estonia, that that was possible to survive in deportation and impossible to survive in Holocaust does not work. I think we have to stop to ignore the accusations and to lighten the role of left orientated Jewish intellectuals in the commitments of Soviet Union.

The very important thing we have to do is also to show that Soviet and Nazi regimes are not completely the same as it use to be interpreted now. In my interpretation I rely on the article „Nazism, Sovietism and Islamism“ written by PhD Mrs. Ludmila Cigelman-Dumerskaja, the researcher from Jerusalem.

I think this is very important in Estonia where old people who in their early twenties thought that they struggled for the independence of Estonia against Soviet occupation being on the side of Nazi Germany.

Today they keep on efforts to establish the monuments to the Estonians who were the soldiers of the Waffen SS. This is not only the marginal group and we have to admit it.

In the middle of April 2006 the book „Holocaust – the regrettable Zionist`s falsehood of 20th century“ written by Tiit Madisson, the dissident who being the leader of City Council of the countryside Lihula tried to establish the monument to Nazi soldiers, was broadly advertised as an interesting bestseller by one of the most respectful book store „Rahva

Raamat“ (Folks Book). There was no one organisation who protested against this, the director of the book store told me.

Estonians still keep thinking that Nazi occupation was much better than the Soviet one.

Estonian historians like to see in Alfred Rosenberg who some years lived in Estonia a great supporter of Estonian independence in Nazi Germany.

If Jewish scientists agree to discuss with them the topic „Participation of Jews in crimes committed by Soviet regime“ it would be easier to explain them that Nazi ideology would take death and damage also for the Estonian nation.

Themes for discussion

2.

Even those Estonians who do not want to admit the collaboration with Nazis in Holocaust concern about Israel. The 91-years old Elisabeth R., who occurred to be a witness in Klooga but later did not want to answer to the phone calls and completely disappeared, told us: „This is better to forget Holocaust, but what is taking place now with Israel is really awful!“

Estonians sympathize Israel because of many reasons. They have the same and even bigger percent of non- Estonian population (30), they still remember the same efforts to establish national autonomy in the North-East where 4 – 10 percents of populations are Estonians with a capital in Revel (Tallinn) in 1990, they have the similar geopolitical situation in Baltic sea (compare the interests of Russia with interests of Egypt as a biggest country in region), the same modern history (compare the wars for the independence of Israel and war for the independence of Estonia against Red Russia and German Landerweer). This is much more easy to find understanding in the question of survival of Israel as a national State for Jewish than in Holocaust.

On January 27 the elite Economical Gymnasium in Tallinn bought the two demonstrations of my film „Your Name Shall Be Israel“. The teachers told me after the demonstration that their children were even more impressed by the last part of their film where the situation in Israel is interpreted as a continuing struggle against Jewish people and Judaism.

In the first telecast „Ten Commandments“ we interviewed people in the street of Tallinn. We asked them only one question: Are you concerned about survival of Israel?

Our first interview is made in front of the Concert Hall „Estonia“. We asked a man, who bought tickets to the concert of Avi Benjamin „Devil in Moscow“ which should take place in May 2004.

His answer was: „We, Estonians do not want to establish here, in the territory of Estonia the state for so called national minorities, especially if to take into consideration the fact that the minorities here are the representatives of Great nations located around us“.

Your opinion.

Is it fruitful to interpret the situation with Jewish State in the Semitic region and the attitude toward Israel and Jews – new Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israelism in the world - as continuing struggle against Judaism and Jews and thus something comparable to Holocaust?

I am on the opinion that in spite the fact that our nation has today our own state and there are no concentration camps and gas chambers that many people count as the only indicator of Holocaust, we can find a great number of elements of Nazi ideology what are adopted by Islamic political extremism left intellectuals in Europe and US.

Israel is discriminated in political arena and in international mass-media. The Hartas of PLO and Hamas declare the aim to destroy Jewish state more clearly then Wannzee Conference declared the purpose to destroy Jews in Europe.

A great number of painfull parallels with Holocaust arouse in me while preparinfg for my film and telecasts.

And the main of them is that I feel like being murdered when I am hearing about the murderings of Jews in Israel. This is an inner feeling and nobody can take it off me.

The accusations in the suffering of Palestinian Arabs and attempts to explain the attacks against Israel as a punisment for this remind me the accusations in participation of the crime commited by Communist regimes and a „collective and deserved punishment“ – Holocaust.

My interpretation Holocaust as as a violation of Ten Commandments offers to opportunity to develop a new approach in teaching Holocaust for future generations.

The war between West and East is a religious war.

The religion is playing more and more important role in identification, That it was before in secularized world.

**That`s why I am sure in the actuality of my approach.
My expirience with my film and telecasts shows that this approach is realistic.**