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יידישער JEWISH
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YIVO in Vilnius and the World

Call for Papers: YIVO 100th Anniversary Conference

19-21 October 2025

Location: Vilnius University and Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania (Vilnius, Lithuania)

In spring 1925 the Yidisher visnshaftlekher institut (Yiddish Scientific Institute), known as YIVO, was established in Vilnius. At this time Yiddish was the native language of approximately 11 million people, and Jewish Vilna was world renowned as a center of Yiddish culture. In Eastern Europe, secular Jewish Diaspora Nationalists promoted their own national life in the countries of their residence, creating a new movement that gave rise to a network of innovative cultural institutions. These culminated in the creation of YIVO, which became the center of a global network of scholars and support groups. The efforts to rescue a portion of the institute's collections during the Holocaust and transfer them to New York was no less of a monumental achievement. While YIVO continues its work today in New York, it remains a symbol of the rich heritage of the Vilna Jewish community.

The year 2025 been recognized by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania as the jubilee year of YIVO's establishment. In celebration of YIVO's 100th anniversary, this conference invites scholars at all stages of their academic careers to explore the significant contributions of YIVO to Jewish scholarship, culture, education, and heritage; the role of YIVO's scholars and supporters in local, regional, national, and international social and cultural networks; and their relationship with non-Jewish academic and government institutions. We welcome discussion of YIVO's symbolic role both historically and in present-day Vilnius. Finally, we seek papers reflecting on YIVO's historical impact, its legacy in contemporary Jewish studies, and its possible role as a model for innovative approaches to preserving and promoting Jewish heritage globally.

We invite proposals for papers on topics including but not limited to the following:

- Historical perspectives on YIVO's founding and development;
- YIVO's influence on Jewish education and scholarship;
- The role of YIVO in the preservation of Yiddish language, literature, and culture;
- Personalities who contributed to YIVO's legacy and new trends in research that they inspired;
- Networks of individuals and institutions associated with YIVO around the world;
- YIVO's activities and its relationship with other institutions in the city of Vilnius and the region of interwar Poland and Lithuania;
- The role of YIVO in the self-image of Vilna's Jewish community and its symbolic role today in Vilnius and elsewhere;
- New developments in the study of the East European Jewry that continue YIVO's intellectual traditions.

Organisational Committee:

Chair: Prof. Dr. Jurgita Verbickienė, Vilnius University Faculty of History

Prof. Dr. Cecile E. Kuznitz, Bard College

Prof. Dr. Justin Cammy, Smith College

Dr. Jonathan Brent, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

Doc. Dr. Loreta Skurvydaitė, Vilnius University Faculty of History

Dr. Lara Lempertienė, Judaica Research Centre of Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

Prof. Dr. Mindaugas Kvietkauskas, Vilnius University Faculty of Philology

Dr. Michał Trębacz, Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute

Prof. Dr. Perla Sneh, National University of Tres de Febrero; IWO Institute Argentina

Prof. Dr. Samuel D. Kassow, Trinity College

The organizers will cover accommodation expenses, and some travel grants will be available.

Submission Guidelines:

- Abstracts of 250 words should be submitted by May 5, 2025, via e-mail: jewishstudies@if.vu.lt
- Please include your name, affiliation, and contact information with your submission. The conference will be conducted in English.

Important Dates:

- Abstract Submission Deadline: May 5, 2025
- Notification of Acceptance: June 5, 2025
- Conference Date: October 19-21, 2025

Contact Information:

For inquiries, please contact: Dr. Dovilė Čypaitė- Gilė, e-mail: jewishstudies@if.vu.lt We look forward to your contributions in celebrating YIVO's legacy and exploring the future of Jewish culture and heritage.

The conference is organised in partnership with Vilnius University, the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, IWO Foundation - Institute for Jewish Research.