

YIVO in Vilnius and the World

Centennial Conference



October 19–21, 2025

Vilnius University

Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

CONFERENCE ORGANIZER



Vilnius
University

IN COOPERATION WITH



Sunday, October 19

Venue: Vilnius University, Aula Parva, Universiteto str. 3

16:00 – 17:00 Conference Opening Greetings & Keynote

Keynote Speaker: Jonathan Brent - *YIVO's Commitment to the Future: New York, Vilnius and Beyond* (Executive Director, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research)

17:00 – 18:30 Panel Discussion: YIVO at 100 – Major Themes in YIVO's History

Moderator: Justin Cammy (Smith College)

Panelists:

- Cecile E. Kuznitz (Bard College)
- Kalman Weiser (York University)
- Silvia Hansman (IWO-UNTREF)
- Michal Trębacz (Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute)

18:45 – 20:30 Dinner for Participants with Modern Yiddish Music

Remarks by Tomasz Jankowski (Vilnius University) on popular Yiddish music between the Wars

Monday, October 20

Venue: Vilnius University, Senate Hall, Universiteto str. 3

08:30 – 10:00 Panel: YIVO as a Local Institution – Lithuanian, Polish, Russian Contexts

Chair: Darius Staliūnas (Lithuanian Institute of History)

Speakers:

- Brian Horowitz – *Dubnov's Children: YIVO's Russian Legacies* (Tulane University)
- Mindaugas Kvietkauskas – *YIVO and National Scientific Institutions in Vilnius* (Vilnius University)
- Joshua Zimmerman – *Intellectual Origins of YIVO* (Yeshiva University)

10:00 – 11:30 Panel: YIVO as a Local Institution – Jewish Contexts

Chair: Silvia Hansman (IWO-UNTREF)

Speakers:

- Magda Sara Szwabowicz – *Between Revival and Resistance: Perspectives of Vilnius Hebraists on the Rise of YIVO* (Jagiellonian University)
- Ellen Kellman – *Der veg tsu undzer yugnt: Debates Over Vocational Training versus Humanities Education in Interwar Vilna* (Brandeis University)
- Saulė Valiūnaitė – *Entering a Boys' Club: Women in the YIVO Aspirantur Program* (Lithuanian Institute of History)

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee Break

12:00 – 14:00 Panel: YIVO and the World of Jewish Museums

Chair: Giedrė Jankevičiūtė (Vilnius University & Lithuanian Culture Research Institute)

Speakers:

- Laima Laučkaitė – *Enigmatic Issues of the YIVO Art Museum* (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute)
- Vilma Gradinskaitė – *Marc Chagall and the Opening of the Jewish Art Museum at the YIVO in Vilnius* (Lithuanian National Museum of Art)

- Marta Kapelusz – *Art in Rubble: Józef and Ernestyna Sandel and Their Role in the Formation of the JHI Museum (1947-1953)* (Polish Academy of Sciences, Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute)
- Tom L. Freudenheim – *YIVO at the Nexus Between East and West: Jewish Museums in Warsaw and Berlin* (Independent scholar)

14:00 – 15:00 Lunch

15:00 – 17:00 Panel: A Treasury of YIVO Collections

Chair: Mindaugas Kvietkauskas (Vilnius University)

Speakers:

- Christoph Dieckmann – *Aspects of the Prehistory of the “Historical Section” of YIVO, 1918-1925* (Independent scholar)
- Glenn Dynner – *Processing Modernization: The Extraordinary Eliyahu Guttmacher Collection* (University of Virginia)
- Dovilė Troskovaitė – *YIVO Materials on Nazi Attitudes towards East European Karaites: The Case of Julius Brudzkus’ Report on Karaites* (Vilnius University)
- Yehudah DovBer Zirkind – *Recovering a Lost Treasure: YIVO’s Committee for the Study of Hasidism, 1949-1952* (Tel Aviv University)

17:00 – 17:30 Opening of Exhibition “Who is He?”

Keynote: Jurgita Verbickienė (Vilnius University) - *Who is he? The Untold Tales* and opening of short term exhibition

Venue: Franciszek Smuglewicz Hall

18:30 – 20:30 Public Lecture

Speaker: Samuel Kassow (Trinity College) - *Zalmen Reyzen’s and Max Weinreich’s Image of Interwar Vilna*

Venue: Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, Statehood Room, Gediminas Avenue 51

Tuesday, October 21

Venue: Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania,
Conference Hall, Gediminas Avenue 51

09:00 – 10:30 Panel: YIVO Personalities – The Weinreichs and Their Legacy

Chair: Ellen Kellman (Brandeis University)

Speakers:

- Jan Schwarz – *Max Weinreich in Copenhagen, 1939-1940: Between Two Worlds* (Lund University)
- Kalman Weiser – *From Yiddish Scientific Institute to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research: Max Weinreich and the Challenges of America* (York University)
- Alec Leyzer Burko – *The Weinreichs and the Yiddish of the Future* (Independent scholar)

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:00 Panel: YIVO Personalities – Before, During, and After the Holocaust

Chair: Lara Lempertienė (Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania)

Speakers:

- Daniela Ozacky Stern – *From YIVO to the Estonian Camps: Reexamining the Legacy of Zelig Kalmanovich* (Western Galilee College, Israel)
- Perla Sneg – *From Vilnius to Buenos Aires: Szmerke Kaczerginski, the Many Faces of the Resistance* (IWO Foundation, National University of Tres de Febrero)

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 15:00 Panel: YIVO as a Global Institution

Chair: Jurgita Verbickienė

Speakers:

- William Pimlott – *The Science of Networked Yiddishlands: YIVO's Foreign Branches, 1925-1994* (New York University)
- Nick Underwood – *Becoming Friends in Paris: YIVO and the City of Light* (College of Idaho)

- Ewa Koźmińska-Frejlik - ...*The experience of every Jew, no matter where they lived under the German occupation, is a historical document... The Central Jewish Historical Commission in Poland as a Continuator of YIVO's Legacy (1944-1947)*, (Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute)
- Malena Chinski - *Displaying and Memorializing the Khurbn in IWO Exhibits, Buenos Aires, 1947-1953* (Instituto de Desarrollo Económico y Social)

15:00 – 15:30 Conference Summary

Chair: Samuel Kassow (Trinity College)

- Giedrė Jankevičiūtė (Vilnius University & Lithuanian Culture Research Institute)
- Christoph Dieckmann (Independent scholar)
- Lara Lempertienė (Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania)

15:30 – 16:30 Curated Tour

Exhibition: *YIVO Centennial: Origins, Journey, Legacy* with Lara Lempertienė

18:00 – 19:30 Book Launch

Lithuanian translation of Cecile Kuznitz's book *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture: Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation*

Organizational Committee:

Chair: Prof. Dr. Jurgita Verbickienė, Vilnius University

Prof. Dr. Cecile E. Kuznitz, Bard College

Dr. Dovilė Čypaitė-Gilė, Vilnius University

Prof. Dr. Justin Cammy, Smith College

Dr. Jonathan Brent, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

Dr. Loreta Skurvydaitė, Vilnius University

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

Prof. Dr. Mindaugas Kvietkauskas, Vilnius University

Dr. Michał Trębacz, Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute

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

Prof. Dr. Samuel D. Kassow, Trinity College

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