

## **EAJIS Conference Grant Programme 2018/19**

### ***REPORT***

#### **The 26th Annual International Conference on Jewish Studies (Moscow)**

The **26th Annual International Conference on Jewish Studies** was held In Moscow on July, 14-16, 2019. 214 scientists from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Estonia, Israel, Great Britain, USA, Canada, France, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania, Italy, Lebanon, Turkey, as well as numerous guests, graduate students participated in it.

The conference was organized by the *Sefer* Center with the support of the European Association for Jewish Studies, Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, the Russian Jewish Congress, Genesis Philanthropy Group, the *Joint* Distribution Committee, the Russian Presidential Grants Fund, and the Moscow Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center.

The variety of problems discussed at the conference was reflected in the structure of its program, which included 42 sections devoted to traditional areas of Jewish studies (Biblical and Talmudic studies, Jewish Thought, Jewish History of different periods, Lithuanian and Romanian Jewish History, Judeo-Christian relations, the Holocaust, Israeli studies, Mountain Jews and Non-Ashkenazic Communities studies, Languages and Literature, Art, Theatre, Ethnology, Museum and Archival sources, etc.).

Previous experience of combining the international conference with a youth conference, which received a positive evaluation, was continued this year, thanks to that young researchers could submit their reports to the discussion of the academic community.

Please see the program here:

[https://www.sefer.ru/rus/education/international\\_conferences/Prog\\_Eng\\_2019.pdf](https://www.sefer.ru/rus/education/international_conferences/Prog_Eng_2019.pdf)

At the opening of the conference, the Ambassador of the State of Israel in the Russian Federation, His Excellency Gary Koren, and the Director General of the Euro-Asian Jewish

Congress, one of the sponsors of the conference, Haim Ben-Yakov, delivered their welcoming speech.

The presentation of new editions of the Center "Sefer" and the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences was held as well. The following books were presented:

- *Tirosh. Works on Jewish Studies*, Vol.18;
- Collection of articles *Prohibitions and Prescriptions in the Slavic and Jewish Cultural Traditions*, Vol.19 (which includes the papers delivered during the annual International Judeo-Slavic Academic Conferences)
- *Academic Judaic-Slavic Journal* in Russian

Svetlana Amosova and Mikhail Vasilyev presented *Sefer* programs: an Internet database of ethnographic, epigraphic and archival data SFIRA; grants for research on Russian Jewry and for the projects in Jewish studies.

Professor Eugene Wiener grant was awarded during the plenary session. The grantees of this year were young PhD scholars Svetlana Pogodina (Museum of Jews of Latvia, Riga), Victoria Gerasimova (Omsk University). Ekaterina Norkina (Sanct-Petersburg University). According to the tradition, the conference also included a presentation of the newest Judaica publications of the last year by colleagues from different countries.

According to the feedback of all the participants the conference was well prepared and held at a high level, it was very interesting and useful in various ways. Presentations are getting more diverse on topics, there are topical sections, and the *Sefer* conference year by year become better and more informative, what was mentioned as a constant trend.

Due to the EAJS travel grants 14 students and early career researchers from Belarus, Poland, Switzerland, Germany, Romania, Lithuania, France, Russia, Ukraine, Israel have got the opportunity to participate in the Conference.

The following are reports by **PhD students and early career researchers who received travel grants.**

1. Anna Bogdanova (Minsk, Belarus) PhD student
2. Jagoda Budzik (Poznan/Wroclaw, Poland) PhD student
3. Chaja (Vera) Duerrschnabel (Bern, Switzerland) PhD student
4. Alexandra Elkonina (Cologne, Germany) PhD student
5. Silvia Hershkovich (Tel Aviv, Israel) PhD student
6. Konstantin Karpekin (Vitebsk, Belarus) PhD, Early Career Researcher
7. Juliyana Leganovich (Vilnius, Lithuania) PhD student
8. Joshua Leung (Paris, France) PhD student
9. Dmitriy Nechiporuk (Nevel / Tumen, Russia) PhD student
10. Dmitriy Prokhorov (Simferopol, Ukraine) PhD, Early Career Researcher
11. Mantas Siksnians (Vilnius, Lithuania) PhD student
12. Anca Aurelia Tudorancea (Bucharest, Romania) Early Career Researcher
13. Yulia Yermak (Grodno, Belarus) PhD student
14. Esther Zyskina (Jerusalem, Israel) MA student

1. **Anna Bogdanova** (Minsk) The camp Maly Trostenets: Place of the Catastrophe and Memory  
The Maly Trostenets camp is a key place for the mass destruction and use of forced labour in the territory of occupied Belarus. This is a place of grief for the victims of Nazism of all categories, as prisoners of the camp were not only Jews deported and local, but also partisans and underground.

The first Jews who were interned in Maly Trostenets were German Jews sent from Riga in May 1942, and Viktor Arais's team formed the basis of protection during the first period of the camp's formation, as evidenced by the interrogation protocols. Maly Trostenets is a place of destruction, forced maintenance and use of labour, but not a concentration camp. There were no prisoners who wore robes, there were no overseers, there was a conveyor belt of death - someone survived, someone not. But in our understanding, this was not Auschwitz (Auschwitz), nor Sachsenhausen or Buchenwald.

Noteworthy was the periodization proposed myself to the victims of the war and, in general, the memory of the war in Belarus: 1944 - 1980s: Formation and accumulation of official discourse in the framework of Soviet ideology and the memory of the great Patriotic war ; 1990 - 2000s: Deconstruction of Soviet narrative, nationalization of historical memory and the formation of the official discourse on World War II; 2008 - 2019: Integration of the national memory model into the pan-European space of memory of the Second World War . Nevertheless, unlike Latvia and

other Baltic republics, Nazi collaborators are not praised in Belarus. In the history of Belarus, the collaboration is not accepted - there are no heroes among the Nazi regime's accomplices. So far, the themes of victory and victims among the civilian population prevail in the mass consciousness, and not the topic of collaboration. Only four researchers are engaged in it and more so in terms of statistics: who, when and how much there were them.

Participation in the 26-th conference gave me the opportunity to meet with foreign colleagues dealing with Holocaust Studies and even listen to some criticism on my paper. I especially want to thank Professor Arkady Zeltser for valuable comments that will help me in my future research.

## 2. *Jagoda Budzik* (Wroclaw)

### *Other Family Stories. Poland and the Quest for Identity in Israeli Literature of the Third Generation*

The motif of families reliving the experience of their Holocaust memories, seen from a child's perspective, became most prominent in second generation literature, as for example in David Grossman's novel *See Under: Love*. Silent families and travelling to Poland in the 1970s and 80s, a country which has nothing more to offer to its visitors than a sense of emptiness is one of the themes that transpire as the most visible in this group of texts. It is also third generation writers who reach for the variously interpreted motif of returning to one's roots. However, in the texts I have selected for discussion (e.g. *Ha-Neckes* by Rutu Modan, *Bandit* by Itamar Orlev, *Ha-Shtikot* by Yuval Yareach) that quest has a changed. By introducing ambiguity to the solidified narrational schemata or by altering them altogether the authors discussed in the present paper turn a family experience into a form of a statement. Each of the texts under consideration here distances itself from what it considers to be "a memory mainstream" with the use of different means of expression (generic, formal and narrational).

In this context the motif of a journey to Poland appears as a useful tool offering an insight into the dynamics of the identity formation process. The strategies of using clichés about Poland – or intentionally defying them – often mirror the author's worldview. However, when they refer to their biographies, the character of the reference is frequently a form of a statement – ideological, ethical or aesthetic – made in response to the patterns of narrating the Holocaust in Israel. More than of Poland, they speak of the challenges that Israeli collective imagination is to face itself.

The panel I had a pleasure to participate in was devoted to the topic of Jewish literature. The panel was chaired by Dr. Olaf Terpitz from Graz and Victoria Mochalova from Moscow. Eventually it included four speeches, whose authors were dealing with different aspects of (mostly) Hebrew literature. The range of topics discussed in the section was impressively wide which proved how complex and ambiguous the field of Jewish literature is, even when limited to authors writing in Hebrew almost exclusively. In the first presentation Ofra Matzow-Cohen from Ariel College discussed the strategies of construction of landscapes of the Levant in the Land of Israel in Asher Barash's stories proving, how deeply loaded was his vision on new-old Jewish homeland. The issue of landscape's construction perceived as a semantically loaded narrative tool telling a story of one's identity was also the topic of Professor Orsion Bartana's talk where the author analysed the visions of Jerusalem in *Lurian* by David Shahar developing the idea of Hebrew identity as destiny. Miriam Neiger from Jerusalem discussed the meeting of two Jewish poets – Avigdor Hameiri and Abraham Sutzkever in Siberia. The symbolic load of their encounter allows to perceive it as a reunion of various factors constituting Jewish identity and Jewish cultural heritage represented by Hebrew and Yiddish poetry. This fact draws one's attention to its dialectic nature, characterized both by diversity and unity.

Sadly, the fourth speaker, Emma Berg from Manchester did not make it to the conference, thus my presentation was the last one. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to hear and answer all the questions in reaction to my presentation. I really enjoyed the idea of comparing Israeli and Polish third post-Holocaust generation authors as Professor Victoria Mochalova suggested in her question. Another interesting context has been opened by the panel's chair, Dr. Olaf Terpitz who asked about the impact of Yael Bartana's "Polish Trilogy" might have on my research. This question gave me an opportunity to elaborate on other aspects of the phenomenon I focus on in my research, not included into the paper itself, which I truly appreciated.

#### *Personal feedback*

I find the panel an extremely interesting, well-prepared and fruitful experience. I would like to add that the conference was for me a priceless opportunity to share the results of my current research as well as to learn about many fascinating projects conducted by my colleagues from all over the world. Thank you

### **3. Alexandra Elkonina (Cologne, Germany) PhD student**

Based on the support of European Association of Jewish Studies I could present the presentation entitled "Duisburg JCC's architectural projects. The aspects of contemporary architecture of German synagogue" at the 26<sup>th</sup> International Annual Conference regarding Jewish Studies.

My research was devoted to occurred competitive tender of building of the community centre in the German industrial city Duisburg, which took place in 1996. In my research I discussed several projects, which were presented to the committee. Among them a special place was taken by symbolic and metaphorical projects of architects Zvi Hecker and Daniel Libeskind. The first of them was elected for building.

I presented my research at the Youth Section “Jewish Art: Architecture”, chaired by Vladimir Levin. For me as a junior researcher there was very important as presentation experience (at this place individual thanks to Iliya Lensky for the synchronic translation of my speech) as well as the experience to receive the feedback on it. I’m grateful for the Valuable feedback from Vladimir Levin. Necessary impulse for the next step of the research I got from the discussion with Olga Levitan. For the current research and next steps I really appreciate the opportunity to sync with Katrin Kessler.

The attendance of this conference gave me the chance to explore the field broader and attend some fascinated presentations of other speakers. So I was glad to attend by the panel “History and Culture of Mountain Jews”, at that I want to especially emphasize the presentation of Valeriy Dymshits and Mark Kupovetskiy, as well as wonderful research of Vasiliy Schedrin, Galina Eliasbergand and Esther Zyskina at the panel “History and Culture of European Jewry: Haskalah”. Lithuania is one of especial and permanent interest for me for a long time, that’s why I couldn’t not miss to visit the panel “History and Culture of Lithuanian Jews”. I did not only enjoy the presentation of Lara Lempert, but also her style as the moderator.

At the same time I could be happier to have a chance to attend the presentation of Iliya Lensky “Paul Mintz: Towards a Socially Political Biography“. At the last year during the *Sefer* summer school in the Lettland I attended a course of Professor Mikhail Krutikov’s lectures regarding the poet Itzik Manger. Thus when I explored the conference program, I was confident regarding what presentation was going to be the last session for me. At that point I want to express the gratitude to Ekaterina Kuznetsova for the organization of the panel *Fifty Years Since the Death of Itzik Manger* and to the *Sefer* for the opportunity to meet personally with Ekaterina. Recruitment of such charismatic speakers as Dov-Ber Kerler, Valeriy Dymshits and Leonid Roytman strengthen me on the wish to learn Yiddish generally and study the writing of Manger specifically.

Besides presentation it was very important for me to have a chance to collaborate with Arkadi Zeltser, above mentioned Olga Levitan and Katrin Kessler, also with Sergey Busko, Alexandr Petukhov, Maria Prokofyeva, Ekaterina Tolerenok, Elizaveta Zabolotnykh, acquaintance with Ekaterina Kuznetsova, Victoria Gerasimova, Gelena Yoffe and Chen Bram. I hope to continue to be in touch with mentioned colleges.

Especially I wish to thank *Sefer* and its partners for an excursion at the Moscow Jewish Museum. With the help of the wonderful guide Anastasia Deka I could better understand the logic of the permanent exhibition and get to know better its work. I was very impressed by the well-coordinated work of the Excursion Department under the direction of Oleg Melamed.

#### **4. Chaja Vered (Vera) Duerrschnabel. A structural analysis of Aramaic magic bowl texts**

Incantation bowls from Late Antique Mesopotamia are an important source of Jewish magical practice. The language of these Aramaic, Syriac and Mandaic bowls is highly stylized, figurative and structured. Focusing on Jewish Aramaic Curse Texts from Late-Antique Mesopotamia, we presented a detailed structural analysis of selected bowl texts (e.g. BM 91767, VAM 2509, etc.) and showed the underlying structural concept of Aramaic curse texts which are normally divided into several well-defined parts (e. g. self-designation, opening formula, request/command focusing, adjuration, etc.). On the one hand, we showed how the general incantation structure of the much more frequent apotropaic magic bowls is adjusted to the curse texts, on the other hand, we examined recurring magic formulae and metaphors in the incantation texts. Whilst the first part of our paper analysed the general literary structure of the curse bowls, the second part of this contribution was dedicated to the linguistic analysis of the verbal forms used in the incantations, especially in the request/command for cursing and the actual cursing process. In this part we examined not only the diathesis, tense/aspect and person/gender of the verbal utterance, but also the modality which expresses the speaker's attitude toward the action with regard to necessity, possibility or obligation. In general, curses express the desire of the speaker that some form of adversity or misfortune will befall or attach to some other entity. Therefore, they can be described as wishes and should be future oriented and have an optative mood. We carefully examined the linguistic features of these verbs expressing the cursing progress and then compare it with the linguistic features of the other verbs used in the incantation. This comparison illustrated that there are not only several clearly distinguishable parts within one incantation text, but also that this division can be illustrated both with regards to content and with regards to the linguistic features of the verbs used in the utterances.

My section was called *Biblical Studies* and it was a complete youth section which was held on Monday afternoon. Although all papers apart from mine have been in Russian and I only started to learn the Russian language one year ago, I could follow the main ideas of the presentations because of the English Power Point presentations.

For me, it was really useful that my paper was read before by a reviewer (Alexey Lyavdansky, Russian State University) who deals with the same material and could give me some helpful comments on my presentation. Following my presentation, we had an interesting and fruitful discussion on the performativity of magical texts and the question if the classical definition of performativity by Austin must be modified. I am also especially grateful for the useful comments given to me by Shani Tzoref from University of Postdam.

#### *Personal feedback*

Thank you so much for the inspiring time in Moscow. Like last year *Sefer* was the perfect place for me to find new impulses for my own work, to meet interesting people and share mutual research interests. Thanks to *Sefer* I have met not only other researchers from Russia and the Eastern part of Europe, but we also have become friends. After the *Sefer* conference in 2017 I started to learn Russian. At the moment, I have around three lessons a week. It was one of the best things I ever decided to do. It is a great benefit for my scientific work because I will start to read Russian literature on my subject soon. I look forward to come back in 2019 or even before.

### **5. Romania, Romania, Romania... *Sefer* Center, Moscow 14-16/7/2019**

#### **Summary of session- Sylvia Hershcovitz**

The session shed light on four aspects of Romanian Jewry historiography during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the first two papers dealt with Jewish leaders and professionals, the second part voiced Jewish women networks and activities.

The first paper, presented by Bulent Senay of Borsa University, looked at two important Jewish figures in Romania, Moshe Bejarano and Sabbetay Djaen; both rabbis and poets. They served as study cases for a wider analysis of Jewish religious and cultural leadership. Senay stated that rabbis were true mediators between different worlds, not only as far as religion is concerned, but also in terms of culture and politics. They played an important role in the development of the Sephardim Jews relationship with the Romanian society and leadership as well as in the recognition of those as Spanish citizens.

The second paper was devoted to the life and work of two Jewish modernist architects, Jean Monda and Boris Zilberman; mainly active during the interwar period. They were part of the Romania avant-garde, commonly known to be dominated by Jews. These modern architects designed many beautiful modernist buildings which survived the test of time, the Communist demolitions especially those of 1985-1987. Waldman related to the possible reasons which might have pushed many Jews architects to this architectural style, among them we can find the historical environment and style of life. The lecture was accompanied by pictures of their buildings which is actually the Jewish modernist architectural heritage of Bucharest until these days.

Margalit- Stern presented us with the importance of women networks and their influence of Jewish women lives; Ada Fishman and Selma Margulies served as case studies. Although born in different places and belonging to different women associations in different parts of the world, they shared the understanding of the Zionist role in liberating Jewish women and advancing them as subjects of society. The unique alliance between the two women which started at the 6<sup>th</sup> Wizo conference flourished and culminated with Margulies offer of 21000 pounds to Ada Fishman for the establishment and building of the Jewish girls farm Ayanoth near Nes Ziona. By analysing their network, Margalit Stern offered a novice interpretation of Israel - diaspora relations.

Finally, my presentation focused on The Center for the Protection of Mother and Child, headed by Mela Iancu, an exceptional woman. Although the Center received recognition only in 1939, it actually had its start in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a complex of Jewish school and canteen headed by her family- the Gaster family. My paper focused on the Center's vast activity including its part in rescuing 500 out of the 2000 orphans who were repatriated from Transnistria. Mela Iancu's background, her Romanian and Jewish networks helped her in running one of the most successful enterprises, helping thousands of mothers and children, and rescuing hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust in Romania.

In the time left for questions and discussion, we attended to gender issues such as the number of Jewish women architects during that period of time (none!!), the connection the Center had with other organizations such as the Joint, OSE and the Red Cross, and the influence the rabbis had on their communities. It was a very well planned and interesting session.

## 6. K. Karpekin's report on participation in 26 Conference on Jewish Studies

On July 14 I took part in the section *Jews in the USSR*. The meeting was attended by 5 speakers and about 30 listeners.

First was V. Khiterer's report on *Kyiv as a centre of Soviet Jewish culture in the 1920s – 1930s*. The researcher tried to identify the main reasons why the capital of the Ukrainian SSR became one of such centres. According to the assumption of the speaker, this was facilitated by the following circumstances: first, in the specified period of time, Jews accounted for about 26% of the population of the city, and secondly, the Jewish community of Kiev in its number occupied second place after Moscow, and thirdly, during the civil war, a significant number of intellectuals from Moscow and Petrograd came to Kiev. Also the author of the report noted that during the 1920s and 1930s was conducted reinforced the destruction of Hebrew culture, in fact, developed only of Yiddish culture. A significant part of the report was devoted to the personality of Joseph Liberberg, who held high leadership positions, and sought to concentrate in Kiev archival documents on the history of Jews in Ukraine. The author of the report drew analogies with the Belarusian SSR.

The second was the author of the report, who after the report were asked the following questions: 1) whether the visual documents for the 1920s, with which it would be possible to reconstruct the appearance of the development of towns? 2) what are the reasons for the increase in the number of non-Jewish population of the town in the mid-1920s? 3) what factors determined the location of the village of Vitebsk district Dobromysl to analyse the composition of the documents?

The next speaker was K. Boldovsky, who analysed anti-Semitic events in Leningrad in 1949 – 1953 (*Leningrad case and case of doctors*). The researcher noted that in the first post-war years an out-of-class census of party workers was conducted, the purpose of which was to identify the number of representatives of a particular nationality. According to the results of calculations it turned out that in the Soviet apparatus of Leningrad there were 4 Jewish employees who did not hold the highest positions. These data were used for carrying out party purges which began in 1949. According to the author, the criteria for cleaning were primarily the presence of relatives abroad, receiving parcels from abroad, statements against the Soviet regime. The speaker noted that one of the results of the purges was a deliberate change of nationality by party workers (not only Jews). On the part of the head of the section O. Budnitsky, the opinion was expressed that it is not necessary to speak categorically about anti-Jewish purges in this period, because among Stalin's confidants at that time were Jews who held high positions.

The next report was presented by V. Gerasimova (it was devoted to the personality of E. N. Stoliar – Rabbi and informant of the NKVD). In the introductory part of the report, the researcher analysed the quantitative composition of the Omsk Jewish community, made an excursion into its history. The researcher noted that the post-war period was characterized by an increase in the number of Hasidim. Also V. Gerasimova came to the conclusion that in the second half of the 1940s – 1960s there was a transformation of the consciousness of Jewish believers. This is evidenced by such facts as the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Stalin in the synagogue, the placement of his portrait in the prayer hall, the statements of believers about the need to reform the Jewish faith. The author of the report asked the speaker about the sources used for the study. As might be expected, the report was based on the documents of the Commissioner for religious Affairs of the Council of Ministers. In our opinion, the involvement of a wider range of sources (including private correspondence, memories) contributed to a more comprehensive analysis of the situation.

The last speaker was G. Kostyrchenko, who called his speech *State anti-Semitism under Stalin and Brezhnev: General and differences*. The researcher identified the main periods of the Soviet period, which, in his opinion, were the most difficult for the Jews (the revolution of 1917 and the civil war, 1948 – 1953, the periods of "stagnation" and "perestroika"). According to the speaker, these difficulties contributed to the mass Exodus of Jews from the USSR. The researcher noted that during the 19th – early 20th century, the Russian authorities tried to solve the "Jewish question" (in other words, to evict them from the state), but the issue was not resolved. As a result, the Jews themselves wanted to leave the USSR. According to O. Budnitsky, despite the stated topic, the report did not sufficiently analyse the similarities and differences of the Jewish policy of Stalin and Brezhnev.

#### **7. Julijana Leganovic (Lithuanian institute of History/ Judaica Research Center at National Library of Lithuania)**

The session „History and Culture of Lithuanian Jews“ was chaired by me and Dr. Lara Lempertiene (Judaica research Center at National Library of Lithuania). I gave the audience an insight into the topic *The Myth-Making of the “Jerusalem of Lithuania” in Kaunas between the Two World Wars*. I emphasized that Vilna played and still plays an important role in the history and culture of Lithuanian Jewry. But the concept of Jewish Vilnius as we understand today or expression, *Jerusalem of Lithuania* became the dominant epithet to describe Jewish Vilna in interwar years. Between the two world wars in Kaunas was formed a specific exalted narrative of Vilna, defined by a tendency to anthologize and memorialize the real and existing expressions of

Jewish communal and cultural life. I presented many texts published by Kaunas Jews which were based on the percept of Jewish Vilna as a centre of spirituality supported by every layer of the Jewish population. One of the examples – the monograph *Vilnius in the new Jewish poetry* by Haim Nachman Shapiro, published in Kaunas, 1935, by the Union for the Liberation of Vilnius and which is related to the ethos of the aforementioned Vilna books. The narrative seems related to the sense of fragility of these forms of existence, brought on by the war, and the consequent emphasis on memory recorded in words. And this type of narrative became so popular that it persisted without major change for decades.

The subsequent discussion with prof. Mordechai Zalkin and Dr. Lara Lempertiene centred on Jewish Vilna and its importance. Together with audience also discussed which Christian and Lithuanian symbols (Gediminas castle, Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas, and others) were used in the Kaunas Jews narrative about Vilnius.

#### **8. Joshua Leung (Paris, France) PhD student**

The panel on which I presented was entitled *Eastern Europe in New and Modern Times*. The interventions from scholars were focused in part on Poland, Ukraine and Romania with a time span varying from the 18th and 19th centuries to the 1920s. Dealing with the Polish Minorities Treaty, also known as the “Little Versailles” and the Treaty of Riga, my contribution was situated chronologically towards the end of the period we covered.

With regards to the content, the presentations also varied much, with only two of them dealing with similar topics, though in different countries. The aim of my contribution was to deal with the Jewish Question which was raised on the diplomatic scene in the aftermath of the First World War. In this, my work differs from that of the other panellists who have mainly dealt with issues more on the individual and regional levels rather than governmental and international levels. While dealing with my topic on such a level, I maintain nonetheless that it is important to focus on the individuals and the organisations involved in the narrative as their roles are ones which are not negligible. Perhaps the most complex aspect of my research is the sheer multitude of actors involved in dealing with the Jewish Question. I attempted to demonstrate this in the presentation with a diagram showcasing the actors involved and their relationships with each other, but I have only been able to scratch the surface of this issue with this all too short demonstration.

My goal in presenting such a topic at this conference, especially by including the Treaty of Riga into my analysis was to attempt to situate my topic more within the sphere of Eastern Europe, the focus of the panel and indeed of the conference. While Versailles was undoubtedly more significant and can be studied in greater detail from the Jewish perspective, Riga is notable in a different way, namely for the lack of Jewish presence. This provides for a stark contrast between two treaties which have an important hand in shaping how Poland developed its policies towards its minorities over the course of the interwar years. The presentation was essentially an exercise in treaty analysis, dealing with the Jewish and minorities issues which appeared in both treaties. While the process of the drafting of the Little Versailles showed the extensive influence that the Jews had at the Paris Peace Conference, the Treaty of Riga was the opposite, showing a complete absence of Jews in the drafting process and even in the final result. The legacy of both treaties differed yet again, though perhaps not in the way one would expect. Versailles rankled the Polish government as it was viewed as an imposed treaty. Repeated attempts were made to disregard the treaty in letter and eventually in name. Its effects therefore ceased to apply effectively from 1934 onwards. By contrast, Riga, freely negotiated by the Polish government, was respected throughout the duration of the interwar years. While the clauses dealing with the Jews were non-existent and those dealing with the minorities being minimal, it was more agreeable for the Polish government to uphold them, therefore guaranteeing the minorities these rights even after the demise of the Little Versailles. In summary, treaty analysis is an interesting and perhaps unique method of investigating Jewish influence in state affairs and inversely the effect of state affairs on Jewish rights.

Following the presentation, there was a time dedicated to discussions related to all the presentations of the panel. This was unfortunately very short with not many questions being posed to the contributors. This may have in part been due to the length of the panel and the lack of direct ties between the different interventions. This would have made it difficult to comment on more than one presentation. Perhaps this could have been remedied had the abstracts for the various presentations at the conference been shared with the audience and amongst the panellists prior to the beginning of the conference in addition to the titles of the presentations. I had been under the impression that the Youth Section would receive particular attention from the participants of the panel, detailed abstracts having been submitted prior to the conference. This unfortunately was not the case, and detailed feedback regarding our presentations was limited.

While I understand that the conference aims to englobe all Jewish Studies and thus is obliged to group presentations together under wider headers, this may have been detrimental to the

discussion within the panels. It may have helped increase the volume and quality of the discussion had more specialised and specific panels been formed for the conference. Furthermore, there was the issue of language and translation which may have hampered discussion. I laud the effort made by the conference to provide translation on certain panels. The fact however that most panels were dual-lingual made it hard for non-bilingual scholars to follow the presentations and especially to participate in the discussion. The situation may perhaps in the future be remedied by constituting unilingual panels, though this remains to be decided at the discretion of the organisers of the conference. Shorter and smaller panels of three or four panellists may perhaps also aid in provoking discussion. Panels consisting of six or even seven interventions are long and difficult to follow, especially if the chairs do not provide for a break in between the interventions. Smaller panels may also provide for more specific groupings of presentations which may facilitate more detailed feedback for the panellists.

The large panels however have permitted for a wide diversity of topics to be dealt with at the conference. It was interesting to sit in for talks which had nothing to do with my usual topics of research and to just learn something new and meet other scholars. I also appreciate this opportunity to encounter scholars working on vastly different topics. Even when working on similar topics, it is likely that we have not met before given the distances involved and the fact that this is my first time associating with mainly Russian-speaking scholars. It was therefore enlightening to discuss our different approaches outside of the panels and just exchange with other scholars on various topics, not necessarily directly related to our research.

Overall I have had quite a positive experience attending the 26th SEFER International Conference in Moscow and I would like to thank the organizers once again for extending me an invitation. It was a unique experience and the first time that I have attended a conference of such a large scale. It has been very well organized and the running of the conference has been smooth, before our arrival in Moscow and during our time in Moscow. Nonetheless, as the organisers explained in the closing of the conference, it is also a conference which continues to develop. I hope that the feedback I have provided in this report will be of use to you and thank you once again for the unique experience.

#### **9. Dmitry Nechiporuk (Nevel / University of Tyumen)**

The past Sefer conference-2019 in Moscow was consisted of the various panels. I participated at the panel *The history of Jews in Russian Empire*. The panel was divided into parts and I took a participation in the second part of it. There were seven papers during the second part of the

panel, some of them have common aspects. For example, my paper *A survey of documents on the emigration from Russia to the US, 1881-1917* reflects to some extent similar developments with a paper which was delivered by Anastasia Strakhova (Emory University) *A practical organization of the Emigration from Russia, 1891-1914*.

In my paper I made a brief survey of the historical sources on the Emigration. They were: the military registration cards, the citizenship declarations, the name of the passengers on the board of the ships entered to the USA, the census data, obituaries, etc. Only the complex consideration of these sources could help to establish the full biography of a person who immigrated to the USA.

My case is the Jews from Nevel, who left Russia in 1881-1917. We know at least about 190 people from Nevel town who emigrated in the USA in 1881-1917. Probably, the numbers are higher, but it is enough to trace the dynamics of migration. In my presentation, I discussed the peaks of immigration, the sea routes of emigration, and some family stories of emigration. The main reason why the Jews from Nevel left their home was poverty. Sometimes it was personal troubles (in some cases, see the history of Novik family and escape of Leon Chanukoff (1892-1958).

Moreover, the genealogical sites (ancestry.com, newspapers.com, etc.) combine with the archives give an opportunity to trace the whole path of many Jewish emigrants from Russia. I hope I will write an article about the historical sources on the Jewish emigration from Russia to the USA.

My paper aroused some interest and I received several questions. First of all, I was asked how I interpret the peaks of emigration. Then I was asked about the sea routes of the emigration. Maria Prokofieva (Rostov-on-Don) noted that after my paper she understood why some people fled to the USA via Japan.

In the end, I suggested that it would be very good to make in the future a special panel, which will be devoted to the Jewish migration at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

10. **Dmitry Prokhorov (Simferopol).** The report *The History of the Karaite Community of Crimea in “Ego Documents”*: *Memoirs by the Mayor of Eupatoria Simkha Duvan* was submitted by the present author as a part of the *Non-Ashkenaz Communities* Section work moderated by M. Gammal.

The concepts of *new biographical* or *personal story*, rapidly emerging in modern studies, fill the external forms of biographical and historical works with new insights, which give rise to new research directions with the specific objectives and methodology. Memories of S. Duvan were discovered under the following circumstances. M. Kublitskaya, a former employee of Yalta Local History Museum, now residing in Buenos Aires (Argentina), dedicated efforts to searching and cataloguing papers and documents preserved in libraries related to the past of Russian emigration.

The source received little attention among researches, including specialists on the history of Romanov family and Karaite communities of Russia. Therefore, introducing it into scientific circulation will undoubtedly be of interest not only to the specialists, but also anyone interested in diverse history of the Crimea. In the memoirs, the personality of S. Duvan is vividly reflected both from the scientific and memorial perspective, and although the characteristics that the former mayor of Eupatoria gave to his colleagues and contemporaries are often subjective and personal in nature, these memories are a very valuable example of ego documents related with the past not only of the Crimea, but of Russia as a whole.

Various issues were raised following the discussion. For example, conference participant Dan Shapira inquired about the widespread memoirs of Karaites who had been in exile and whether there were any attempts on my part to carry out further searches for such documents.

The chronological coverage of the events, phenomena, processes, and trends in the field of interreligious interaction examined by the rapporteurs was rather broad: from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the present time. Colleagues were also interested in issues related to the development of the archaeographic thought of the Karaites (report by D. Vasyutinskaya), notes from travellers of Western Europe who visited the Crimean peninsula in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (speaker N. Khrapunov). The report by M. Gammal, devoted to the doctrinal problems of the Karaite community in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, caused the greatest interest of the participants in the discussion. It presented well-known documents, which have not yet been introduced into scientific circulation. The report by N. Kashovskaya was a lively discussion, in which the author

presented the foundations she had found to the Judean cemetery of Chufut-Kale by the famous Russian Hebraist D. Khvolson (“Two expeditions to Chufut-Kale by D. Khvolson in 1878 and 1881 (based on materials foundation of Institute of Oriental Studies of Russia”).

Of the other noteworthy events at the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference on Judaica, one should note a visit to the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center. The permanent exposition presents the history of Russia starting from the period of Catherine II the Great down to our days through the examples of the culture and everyday life of the Jewish people. There were panoramic cinema, interactive screens, audio-visual installations created with the use of unique photo- and video-archives, as well as documents and interviews presented in the museum. The catalogues from these exhibitions, exclusive art books, modern literature and souvenirs, and designer jewellery and Judaica can be found in the Museum Shop. Undoubtedly, participation in such a representative forum of scientists engaged in various areas of Jewish studies will be a positive impetus for the continuation of scientific research.

**11. Mantas Šikšnianas (Lithuanian Institute of History). An overview of the panel dedicated to the history and culture of Lithuanian Jews. 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2019. Moscow**

The panel consisted out of tree presentation. First of all Justas Stončius was speaking about Jews at the 16<sup>th</sup> Lithuanian division underlying different everyday life aspects, such as religious life etc. Mordechai Zalkin had noticed, that those Jews who before the Second World War used to be not religious later started to practice different religious activities.

Later Julijana Leganovič was speaking about Kaunas Jewish community noticing that other communities such as Kaunas was much less researched than Vilnius.

The last presentation was about the Vilnius special 1941-1945. The process of its formation was revealed together with the motivation of its members (it is likely that those who joined the squad did it predominantly because of material gain). One of the specific features of the formation of the squad was connections of its members (new members were often recruited by the existing members of the squad).

After the presentation there were many insights concerning the motivation. For example, what role in this process took the anti-Semitism. One of my suggestions was that the materialism had much bigger impact.

## 12. Anca Tudorancea. Scientific Secretary,

### Center for Study of Jewish History in Romania – Wilhelm Filderman, Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania

I attended this conference with a theme related to the image of the great Yiddish poet Manger (*Images and imaginary of Itzhic Manger in "Adam" magazine*), commemorated 50 years after his death (1969). Working the documentation of the permanent exhibition of the Romanian Jewish History and Culture Museum (MICER), I found a collection of Adam magazines and especially a number dedicated to Itzhic Manger, after his visit and conferences in Bucharest since 1937. Another unpublished documents are from the archive of the Center for the Study of Jewish History in Romania, but also in the MICER archive, like a series of photographs and materials, unknown for the conference participants, specialists in this field. One of the photographs, representing Manger at the age of 14, in Chernivtsi, together with parents and siblings, is permanently exposed (in photographic copy) in the permanent exhibition in MICER, 2nd Floor, section on Yiddish literature. Similarly, a series of articles about Manger in the collection of the "Mosaic Cult Magazine" have been of great interest, being virtually unknown to specialists because of their language of publication. I was asked to read in Romanian one of the landmark poems written by Manger: "Stars on the Roof", published in the "Adam" magazine, in the translation of Simche Schwartz, being appreciated by the special sonority, but also as an access to one of the languages that Manger talked. Translations into the Romanian language of Yiddish poetry are signed by poets as an Enric Furtună, A. Toma, Simche Schwartz, etc. as a tribute, but at the same time as a form of knowledge for Romanian writers who read the magazine "Adam".

Another very important moment was on the 15th of July, the visit to the Jewish Museum and the Tolerance Center, a very interesting building and with a very large exhibition about the history of Russian Jews. We have established contacts with museographers of this museum, we have distributed materials in English about MICER and more importantly we have established links with Alexander Lvov, participant at the conference and organizer of a study trip to Romania ([www.sambation.net](http://www.sambation.net)), for about 70 participants divided into more than one group. Among the participants are academics and artists from Russia, Israel and Ukraine. We will give them a special guide for the Jewish Bucharest and with the help of Mrs. Carmen Iovițu, director of the museum, a visit to MICER (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/templul-Unirea-Sfantă-din-București/807797369276074?rf=135673483130745>), with a presentation on museum research and Jewish history in Romania. The first group will reach Bucharest on 14 August 2019, and we

hope that this visit is a good start for cultural exchanges, but also a continuation for the educational programs started in July with the reopening of the museum and the practice of students of the Faculty of History and Art History and those that will be developed in the future in the form of workshops or conferences.

**13. Report by Yuliya Yermak, Grodno State University im. Y. Kupala, Belarus  
Illegitimate children and crimes against sexual immunity are side effects of the modernization process among Jewish women in Belarus (sec. half of the 19th – early 20th cent.)**

On the basis of archival documents of the NHAB in Grodno and Minsk, the process of changing the position of women in Jewish society was considered through the prism of criminal cases. The chronology of events covers the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, as at this time, the gradual modernization of the traditional way of life of the Jews of the Belarusian part of the Pale of Settlement begins. The purpose of the work is to identify and characterize the side effects of modernization among the Jewish women of Belarus in the sec. half of the 19th – early 20th cent.

Identifying and “returning” women to the Belarusian Jewish history, as well as taking into account the female factor in the study of social and cultural processes, makes it possible to more deeply identify the specifics of the development of the Jewish society of the Belarusian provinces in the second half of the 19th - early 20th centuries, and also show the uniqueness of the history of women of the Jewish religion. The introduction of new archival documents into circulation increases the scientific significance of the research.

The author concludes that Jewish women become hostages of the situation in which they are responsible and guilty of extra-marital relations. Being in such situation woman often moved into the marginal layers, swelling the ranks of prostitutes, vagrants, beggars. This is confirmed by archival documents in criminal cases (illegitimate and stillborn children, cohabitation, rape, abortion), which are considered in the context of the side effects associated with modernization.

During the presentation some comments and suggestions were made:

1. According to the religion rules there are different names to illegitimate children, it depends on different circumstances and position of the woman who has a new born baby.

2. Are there any studies that would compare the number of illegitimate children among Jews and non-Jewish people? – Financial support is needed to conduct such studies as they are extremely complicated, voluminous and take a lot of time.
3. In which areas of Belarus rapes happened more often? Only among Jewish society, were there any patterns etc.? – The research takes the territory of Minsk, Grodno, partially Vitebsk provinces. The documents from Mogilev province were liquidated during WW II. Such crimes happened among different communities of Belarus.

The topic which was presented by Yuliya Yarmak was not a monologue but very active dialogue between speaker and the audience, even during presentation. The atmosphere in which the discussion was friendly and fun. It contributes not only to ask questions but make guess-work, and feel immersive in the environment and conditions of the 19th century Jewish women life. And in the end of the presentation the unifying feeling of joy from the fact that we live in the 21st century soared in the air. Especially significant these feelings were for women.

#### 14. **Esther Zyskina** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

The session *History and culture of the European Jewry in the period of Haskalah* in which I participated on July 15, 2019, was relatively short, but it attracted many listeners, who actively participated in the discussion alongside the presenters. The chairpersons, Ilya Barkuskiy and Vasiliy Schedrin, suggested to alter the structure of the session, so that the common discussion took place after all of the talks were presented, and not after each talk. This helped create a truly vivid dialogue between the presenters and the listeners, focusing on the topic of the session in general and not on the specific presentations. The latter, nevertheless, were all equally of a special interest to me, as the period of Haskalah is the major field of my research.

Five presenters, including myself, took part in the session; all spoke on different aspects of the history and culture of Haskalah and raised important questions. The presentations ran as follows: Ilya Barkuskiy presented a talk *Maimon and Lilienthal – two portraits of the Haskala movement*, which pointed to an interesting similarity between two presumably completely different figures, Solomon Maimon and Max Lilienthal. The presenter came to the conclusion that the thing the both had in common was a kind of messianic view on themselves and their mission.

Next, Vasiliy Schedrin spoke on the topic *Russian Wissenschaft des Judentums: Russia as the Jews' fatherland. 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries* and discussed the continuity between different periods in the development of Wissenschaft des Judentums – mostly its Russian branch.

The third presentation, Galina Eliasberg's *Berliner" VS "Jewish intellectual: two ideological trends in historical-cultural research of P.S. Marek* raised an important question: where lies the difference between a *maskil* and a representative of the Jewish intelligentsia. The topic became an important part of the discussion at the end of the session.

Nicolas Darius Dreyer presented quite a fascinating talk *Unrelenting Hope: German Jewish Historical Novels and the Russian Jewish Journal "Voskhod"* in which he compared the Russian translations of the German Novels published in the journal *Voskhod* to their German originals and, in particular, the alterations made by translators in certain controversial places.

My talk *The Double message: the Ideas of the Haskalah in I.B. Lenissohn's Efes Damim* was the first and the only talk in the youth panel. It was dedicated to the representation of the ideas of Haskalah in the apologetic book *Efes Damim* by one of the most famous writers of the Russian Haskalah, Isaac Baer Levinsohn. My thesis was that this book, although being announced as a book of apology which refuted anti-Jewish stereotypes, was aimed also at the Jewish audience, as it translated several ideas of the Haskalah. I discussed several examples of such ideas and their context and came to a conclusion that the book, in fact, had two messages to translate, one for the non-Jewish audience and one for the Jewish.

I was happy to receive the comments and advice from the chairpersons regarding my research. Also, I find it really important that the question I raised (if the maskilic books were indeed read by a broader audience) inspired an active discussion and went beyond the narrow limits of the question.

Apart from the questions mentioned above, the final general discussion focused on the ideological foundation of the Haskalah and the motivation of the maskilim.

To sum up, our session was fruitful and extremely effective – hopefully, for all of the presenters, as well as for the listeners.