

**EURO-ASIAN JEWISH  
YEARBOOK  
5768 (2007/2008)**

**MOSCOW, 2009**

**EURO-ASIAN JEWISH YEARBOOK – 5768  
(2007/2008)**

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# CONGRESS

## ISRAEL AND THE JEWS OF EURO-ASIA

*Alexander Mashkevich,  
EAJC President*

“In Basel I have founded the Jewish state. Were I to state this loudly today, the response would be universal derision. [...] In fifty years, all will admit it.” This brief note written by Theodor Herzl in his diary after the First Zionist Congress always made me feel amazed and somewhat mystified. This is what happens when you watch a virtuoso illusionist or get acquainted with the advocates of Nostradamus Predictions. However, the fact is that 51 years later (should we consider it an inaccuracy?) the independence of the State of Israel was declared. And this was no trick. Nor was it an interpretation of some vague prophesies. Rather, it was the dreams of millions of our ancestors translated into the political will of a forward-looking publicist, the will, although dazzling, but making it possible to understand the formation of the present-day Israeli nationhood.

This year, the Jewish state is 60 years old. Only the most radical anti-Semites cast doubt on the position of Israel on the world’s political map. Today’s universal order is inconceivable without Israel, and the world’s Jewish community regards Israel as being of paramount importance for the survival and development of the people. The overwhelming majority of the Jews of the entire world regard Israel in the spirit of one of the best known 137<sup>th</sup> psalm celebrating everlasting and selfless love: “May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.”

Numerous ties bind us, the Jews of Eurasia living in different countries of the Diaspora with the Jewish state where we have relatives, friends and colleagues. We are proud of those who had suffered in jails and exile for their open commitment to the cause of Zionism and brought closer the day when the Aliyah had ceased being a challenge to social and political system. At the same time, we appreciate what was done by the heads of

the Soviet Union government who virtually set down the turning point in the voting FOR the State of Israel. Nowadays, it no longer matters to what extent and how opportunistic was the Soviet approach to the formation of Israel. Today, both we and the Israelis gratefully remember Andrei Gromyko who brought the Soviet Union's stand on this question to the attention of the international community.

At present, despite the fact that political systems in some of former Soviet the countries of the Euro-Asian Region have changed and the forms of Jewish lifestyles are different there, our love for the Jewish state remains the same. We closely follow what is going on in the land of our ancestors. We are gratified by many achievements of Israel in the fields of science, high technologies, medicine, housing, infrastructure development, culture, and arts. We take close to heart all the threats and dangers emitting from the ideology of the extremists who want to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth. We compassionate with and help those who become victims of inhuman terrorist attacks committed by the enemies of Israel, indeed, by our enemies.

Many years have passed since our Congress gained new energy by bringing together not only the former "Jews of Silence" but also the Jewish communities of the neighboring countries of the Eurasia region.

We strengthen our relationships with the people and the state of Israel through a multitude of visits, initiatives and programs. Sessions of the General Council of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress and of the EAJC Council of Rabbis, as well as our talks with the senior officers of the state of Israel, are held in Jerusalem. We have repeatedly spoken with the presidents of many of the CIS countries including Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as with the presidents of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina and a number of other European states, about the necessity of taking into consideration the interests of the Israelis.

During the last Lebanon war, when the Hezbollah shells were bursting in the streets of Israeli cities, we went there to lend support to the Israelis. We gave assistance in providing children with summer camps where they could relax away from the shelling, we visited the wounded and rendered humanitarian aid to the TSAHAL soldiers. We brought newsmen from different countries to Israel so that they could tell the truth about the war to their audience. We brought Israeli statesmen and writers to the capitals of Azerbaijan, Russia and Ukraine where they told the audience about the fight against terrorism.

Our strengthening solidarity with Israel stems from the great and uncompromising struggle for the Soviet Jewry that was started 40 years ago by

the Jewish state and the world Jewish community. We greatly admire the valiant leaders of the Zionist organizations who had dedicated many years of their lives to the cause of liberation of the former USSR Jews. The outcome of their many-year selfless work cannot but strike one's imagination today. Israel has received a million-strong Aliyah which turned it into one of the most developed and technology intensive countries of the world. In Australia, Germany, the USA, Canada and in a number of other countries of the Western World, communities of expatriate Soviet Jews, who are actively integrating into the fabric of Jewish life, are aligning their socioeconomic living standards with those of the natives.

At the same time, in the territory of the former USSR and in Eastern Europe, Jewish life has not just revived but is further developing. Almost in every city, there are Jewish communities functioning, there are synagogues, schools and Jewish community centers being restored or built anew. There is not a single community or an organization that does not have close ties with Israel, with its people working in a variety of businesses or cultural and educational institutions.

We are going to continue rendering help in building new synagogues in the countries of Central Asia and in other places where our Congress is operating. The phenomenon of the Central Asian tolerance towards Jews has not yet been studied well enough by the international community, therefore, we have to more actively publicize the unique practice of a good neighborly attitude towards Jews in these Muslim countries. I am sure that positive results of the International Conference for Peace and Concord and of the Congress of World and Traditional Religions held in Kazakhstan, with the active involvement of EAJC, will help us to do that.

Both these forums have contributed greatly to the mutual understanding between different confessions. I am quite positive that the experience we acquired will, in the long run, have a positive impact on settlement of the Middle East conflict. However, it seems to me that the appeal for concord addressed to different Jewish organizations, communities and groups of the Diaspora is what we also need today. For our people, both in Israel and the Diaspora, any dissociation between the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi, the Orthodox and the Reformist Jews or the religious and secular sectors of the "Jewish street" is suicidal.

Within the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, we manage to avoid these discords, first and foremost, owing to the democratic approaches in our work and to the respect of rights of every Jewish group to independence and cultural and spiritual identity. All these years, new members have been joining

our Congress and it kept expanding its geographical presence. Today, EAJC operates over an immense territory stretching from New Zealand to Slovenia.

Wherever our Congress works, we fight against Judaeophobia, including the so called new anti-Semitism which most commonly appears under the guise of anti-Israel or anti-Zionist slogans. We monitor incidents of anti-Semitism on a regular basis, and I am convinced that we have chosen a strategically correct approach working with the younger generation, school teachers and university professors under the “Tolerance: Lessons of the Holocaust” program.

I would also like to place emphasis on the new EAJC’s experience of cooperation with the major national and international Jewish organizations, which is the implementation of our old idea about true partnership. Our cooperation is based on many common interests but the key and the unquestionable one is our support of the state of Israel both at the time of joy and celebration and at the time of ordeal.

There is hardly a single Jewish family in the countries where our Congress operates that hasn’t got relatives or close friends in Israel. I am grateful to all those who have joined us in an effort to maintain the indissoluble unity of holiness of the Jewish tradition and the sanctity of the land of Israel in the hearts of the Jews of the Diaspora. I am thankful to public authority officials and leaders of the Jewish organizations and communities of our countries who do a lot to make relations between the Jews of the Diaspora and the state of Israel instrumental in bringing peace and accord not only among the people of the Middle East but also to all the nations where the Jews live.

We have always strived and continue to strive to maintain peace and security for all the peoples of the world, and particularly for those two peoples who still cannot come to an understanding in the Holy Land. It is our firm belief that the joint efforts of the international community will help secure that understanding and that Jerusalem, the undivided capital of Israel, will remain the spiritual home of the world Jewry and not just a tightly guarded point on a map.

We will have to work long and hard to attain the goals we have set. I am positive that when, as always, we will succeed, it will help Israel and all the Jews to make their dream of peace and prosperity come true. It is only today that this firm conviction is really beginning to take root.

Let the people of Israel live – Am Yisrael Hai!

THE COMMUNAL EVENTS  
AND FOREIGN-POLICY INITIATIVES  
OF THE EURO-ASIAN JEWISH CONGRESS  
BETWEEN JUNE 2007 AND JULY 2008

**2007**

**July 1st.** Astana. Final gala concert of the 3rd Central Asian Festival of Jewish Children and Youth Art “Freilehe Kinder”, organized with the aid of the EAJC. The aim of the festival is to support the revival of Jewish national traditions in the countries of Central Asia.

**July 3rd.** Moscow. EAJC General Secretary, President of the Vaad of Russia and the Federal Jewish Ethnic Cultural Autonomy of Russia (FENKA) Mikhail Chlenov met with U.S. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Russia William Burns at a reception held by the U.S. embassy on the occasion of Independence Day.

EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh took part in a similar event in Yekaterinburg.

**July 3rd.** Crimea. Traditional Summer Field School in Jewish Studies was opened, organized by the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies with the aid of the EAJC.

**July 4th.** Yekaterinburg. Member of Advisory Council on the Ethnic Cultural Autonomy Mikhail Oshtrakh took part in the meeting of the Advisory Council on Nationalities of the Sverdlovsk oblast, opened under the chairmanship of Governor Eduard Rossel.

**July 10th–11th.** New York. A two-day long Directors’ Board meeting of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) – the international organization which presents the German government with claims on behalf of Jews who have suffered from the Holocaust – took place with a speech by Professor Yefim Gologorsky, EAJC General Council member, president of the International Union of Jews – Former Prisoners of Fascism.

**July 12th.** Rome. The games of the 12th European Maccabiade with national teams from 35 countries have come to an end. The Russian “Mac-cabi” delegation was headed by its chairman, EAJC General Council member Vadim Polansky.

**July 19th.** Jerusalem. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov took part in the international Conference on the Future of the Jewish People, officially opened by Israeli Prime-Minister Ehud Olmert.

**August 24th–26th.** Moscow area. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov led a two-day seminar for the leaders of regional and local Jewish ethnic cultural autonomies of the Central, North-Western, Volga, and Ural federal districts of Russia. The seminar was organized by FENKA with the aid of the EAJC.

**September 4th-9th.** Far Eastern krai. EAJC delegation headed by Mikhail Chlenov met with the leaders of Jewish organizations and communities of Russia’s Far Eastern cities.

**September 5th.** New York. EAJC General Council member, research officer at the Center of Social Religious Studies, Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Science, Sergey Vaynshteyn spoke before the participants of the Conference on Press and Interethnic Interaction. The forum was organized by the U.S. Cultural Center of Caucasus Jews, the international charitable foundation Stmegi, and the Hillel Brooklyn College.

**September 6th.** Belarus. EAJC General Council and Ukrainian Vaad Chairman Yosif Zissels placed a wreath by the memorial to Jews who died in the Slutsk ghetto.

**September 9th.** Yekaterinburg. The Jewish Ethnic Cultural Autonomy of the Sverdlovsk oblast (ENKAS), the Sverdlovsk Jewish Culture Society “Hatiqva” (SOEK), the Ural office of the JDC, and the Yekaterinburg Judaic community “Yehudim” (KEROOR) organized a festive concert on the occasion of Rosh haShana. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh offered his New Year’s greetings to the participants.

**September 14th.** Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh led the first Shabbat celebration of the year 5768 in the Youth Center of the SOEK.

**September 21st–25th.** Kiev. The General Assembly of the Catholic Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions took place in the FSU for the first time. EAJC General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels greeted its participants on behalf of the EAJC.

**September 25th.** Yerevan. EAJC General Council member, chairwoman of the Jewish community of Armenia, Rimma Varzhapetyan took part in

the Olympic flame transfer ceremony in honor of genocide victims in the Sudanese province Darfour.

**October 3rd.** Kiev. took part in an international inter-confessional tolerance event “Tent of Peace”, which took place on the premises of the Jewish charitable foundation “Chesed Nakhalat Avot Azriel”. The event was organized by the “Chesed Nakhalat Avot Azriel” foundation and the Ukrainian Jewish Organizations and Communities Association (Vaad) with the support of the American Joint Jewish Distribution Committee.

**October 3rd–4th.** Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh took part in the work of the International Theoretical and Practical Conference “Liberty of Conscience in Modern Russia: Experience, Problems and Development Perspectives”, taking place in the Humanities University building.

**October 9th.** Kazakhstan. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich made a major donation to the British charity United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA) in order for children and youth of Jewish Diasporas to be able to receive quality education in Israel.

**October 10th.** Dnepropetrovsk. EAJC General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels paid a working visit to the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish community and met with the region’s Chief Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetsky.

**October 11th.** Kiev. At the ceremonial opening of the Professor Vladimir Shifrin Center for Jewish Education, EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich presented the EAJC Medal to Jewish Confederacy of Ukraine Vice-President and EAJC Vice-President Eduard Shifrin. The four-story building, whose construction was funded by Mr. Shifrin, hosts a new yeshiva – a Jewish theological institute.

**October 12th.** Zhitomir. EAJC management sent a greeting to the participants of the International Theoretical and Practical Conference “Tolerance as a Modern Social-Humanist Problem”.

**October 16th.** Moscow. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov led a discussion on the perspectives of Jewish charity in Russia, held by the recently founded FENKA “E-Club”.

**October 19th.** Moscow. World Jewish Congress (WJC) General Secretary Michael Schneider and Executive Director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ) Mark Levin (USA) visited the EAJC’s traditional reception at the end of the Autumn holidays, and conversed with the EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich, Vice-Presidents Alexander Bronshtein, Telman Ismailov, Mark Shabad, David Jakobashvili, and Israeli Ambassador to Russia Anna Azari.

**October 18th–21st.** Moscow. As part of the world Jewish youth program Limmud, the International Educational Projects Conference “Lim-

mud-FSU 2007” took place in the “Pokrovskoye” sanatorium in the vicinity of Moscow. Hundreds of guests from dozens of countries enthusiastically attended the numerous lectures, meetings, and round table discussions of this wonderful four-day event, presided over by the co-chairmen of Limud-FSU, EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov (Russia) and famous activist in the World Zionist Movement, Chaim Chesler (Israel).

**October 20th.** Moscow. The Russian branch of the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet le-Israel) held a meeting in “Pokrovskoye”, led by KKL World Chairman Efi Stenzler (Israel) and co-chairman of the Russian branch, EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov.

**October 22nd.** Kiev. EAJC General Council and Ukrainian Vaad Chairman Yosif Zissels took part in a meeting between leaders of Jewish communities and the state’s government, discussing problems of the activity of the state’s Jewish communities. Present at the meeting were the leaders of the Union for Progressive Judaism Communities, the Jewish Foundation of Ukraine, and the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, as well as the executive secretary of the Babiy Yar Committee, department head at the Kiev History Museum, Vitaly Nakhmanovich.

**October 26th.** Moscow. An EAJC delegation participated in the celebrations in honor of Russia’s Chief Rabbi and EAJC Council of Rabbis president Adolf Shayeveich’s birthday. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov presented Rabbi Shayeveich with the EAJC’s medal and diploma.

**October 26th–28th.** Yekaterinburg. The 4th Youth Seminar on the development of informal Jewish education took place as part of a two-year project of the SOEK “Hatiqva”. Its work was led by EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh.

**October 28th–30th.** Jerusalem. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov and General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels, while participating in the work of the Directors’ Board of the Sochnut Jewish Agency, emphatically objected to cutting the budget of educational programs in the FSU. Mr. Zissels took part in a meeting of the Knesset committee on the FSU and Eastern Europe, meeting there Israeli Ambassador to Russia Anna Azari as well as numerous Israeli politicians and public figures.

**November 2nd.** Yekaterinburg. The district youth forum We Are Russians took place in the Ural State University of Mines. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh presented a speech at a round table discussion on “Intercultural dialogue and cooperation, forming patriotism and civic solidarity – essential to successful development of the country”.

**November 9th.** Kiev. EAJC General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels met with head of the security service of Ukraine Valentin Nalivaichenko and vice-chairman of the secretariat of the President of Ukraine Alexander Chaly. The meeting was in discussion of certain aspects of President Victor Yushchenko's visit to Israel, scheduled for November 14th-15th.

**November 16th.** Yekaterinburg. On International Tolerance Day a round table discussion on topical problems of ethno-confessional tolerance in today's Russia took place in the Humanities University of Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh participated in its work.

**November 20th.** Volgograd. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich greeted the participants of the inauguration of the restored Beit David synagogue. The renovation of the synagogue and the purchase of a new Torah scroll were mostly funded by EAJC Vice-President Eduard Shifrin and businessman Alex Schneider.

**November 20th–22nd.** Yerevan. The state ministry of culture hosted an exhibition of the art of Armenia's ethnic minorities. The work of the exposition on Armenian Jewish life was coordinated by chairwoman of Armenia's Jewish community, EAJC General Council member Rimma Varzhapetyan.

**November 22nd.** Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh took part in the presentation of the project "Music and Cuisine – the Language of Tolerance" which has received a grant from the Yekaterinburg Administration. The event, held at the History Museum, was organized by Liah Khatzkelevich, president of the Leah musical salon and vice-president of the ENKAS.

**November 27th.** Moscow. After a prolonged serious illness, Rashid Kaplanov – chairman of the Academic Board of Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization "Sefer" and EAJC General Council member (2005-2007) – passed away.

**November 29th.** Yerevan. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich greeted the participants of the conference "Tolerance as Basis for the Development of a Culture of Dignity", organized by the Tolerance Center and the Jewish community of Armenia. Armenia's minister for culture and education, representatives of the diplomatic corps, international public organizations, and the media all took part in the conference.

**December 10th.** Astana. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich offered his congratulations to the leader of Australian Jewry, one of the founders of the EAJC, Jeremy Jones, on being awarded the honorary medal of the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

**December 12th.** St. Petersburg. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov took part in the official opening of the permanent exposition at the Russian Museum of Ethnography – “The History and Culture of Jews in Russia”, including the period from the times of the Biblical patriarch to life in the Pale of Settlement.

**December 12th–16th.** Far Eastern krai. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov paid visits to the Jewish communities of Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, Blagoveshchensk, and Birobidzhan. In the capital of the Autonomous Region Mr. Chlenov led a seminar for leaders of regional and local Jewish ethnic and cultural autonomies of the Siberian and Far Eastern federal districts.

**December 14th.** St. Petersburg. In the final days of Chanukah, an EAJC delegation headed by General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov took part in the annual mass Chanukah events held by EAJC joint member, the Russian Society of Esthetics and Physical Culture “Maccabi”. Mikhail Chlenov gave the Society’s chairman, EAJC General Council member Vadim Polansky the EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich’s congratulations.

**December 16th.** Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh took part in the Jewish society’s mass festivities on the occasion of Chanukah.

**December 20th.** Kiev. Financial support from the EAJC and the Nadav Foundation helped to open in the National Ukrainian Museum of Art the exhibition “Kultur-Liga. Artistic Avant-Garde of the 1910-1920s”. The exhibition was organized by the NAUKMA Center for Jewish Studies (director – EAJC General Council member Leonid Finberg), the National Ukrainian Museum of Art (director – Anatoly Melnik), and the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine (director – Alexey Onishchenko).

## 2008

**January 10th.** Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh took part in an electors’ meeting on nominations for the position of the mayor, held in the Sverdlovsk House of Peace and Friendship. The ethnic-cultural autonomies and unions of Yekaterinburg voted unanimously for A. Chernetzky.

**January 27th–29th.** Jerusalem. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich participated in a WJC General Council administrative session. During his stay in Israel, Mr. Mashkevich had private meetings with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, President Shimon Peres, and Minister of Infrastructure Binyamin Ben-Eliezer. The members of the EAJC delegation visited the religious

settlement of Beitar and took part in the reception hosted by mayor of Beitar Meir Rubinstein.

**February 3rd.** Kiev. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich greeted the participants of the rally of Sochnut Jewish Agency delegates in the FSU. Beside the management of the Sochnut, the following officials took part in the forum: the leaders of the Ukrainian Jewish community and of the United Israel Appeal (Keren Hayesod), Israeli Ambassador to Ukraine Zina Kalai-Kleitman, and Israeli Ambassadors to other FSU states. Among the problems discussed at the gathering, was the decrease in aliya, Jewish education in the FSU, and Anti-Semitism.

**February 4th.** Moscow. Russia's Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography held a presentation of the Russian translation of the book *Man from Babylon* by famous Georgian author and playwright Guram Batishvili, who is the editor-in-chief of the *Menorah* newspaper and an EAJC General Council member. After the presentation, the documentary "If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem...", based on G. Batishvili's screenplay, was shown.

**February 13th–17th.** Tbilisi. Over a hundred Jewish leaders of Euro-Asian states and their American colleagues first visited Georgia on a joint diplomatic mission of the EAJC (led by Alexander Mashkevich) and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (led by Malcolm Hoenlein). A number of EAJC General Council sessions were held presided over by Yosif Zissels. The EAJC delegation met with President of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili, Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze, Prime Minister Lado Gurgenzidze, Minister of Conflict Resolution Temur Yakobashvili, Patriarch Ilia II, and other Georgian public figures, as well as U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John Teft. Emissaries of leading U.S. Jewish organizations David Benesh (Nativ) and Irina Lipski (JDC) had briefings; the guests were introduced to the activities of the local branch of the Sochnut Jewish Agency, the Or Avner School, and the offices of Joint and Hillel. EAJC experts visited Georgia's Jewish epigraphic monuments. Mikhail Saakashvili hosted a reception for the mission, after which he invited Alexander Mashkevich to meet privately.

**February 18th.** Jerusalem. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov and General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels arrived as part of the international Jewish diplomatic mission from Georgia to Israel, in order to meet with the leaders of the Jewish state and its public organizations. Mikhail Chlenov spoke at a plenary meeting of the Global Forum on Anti-Semitism, led negotiations with the Keren Hayesod leadership, and together with Yosif Zissels participated in a session of the Directors' Board of the Jewish Agency, where he spoke on the state of the communities in the FSU.

**February 18th.** Moscow. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov elected chairman of the Academic Board of Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization “Sefer”.

**February 19th.** Moscow. Yury Raskin appointed EAJC Vice-President. He joined the presidium of the Russian Jewish Congress (RJC) in 1997 as charity program sponsor and leader of the RJC branch in Nizhny Novgorod. In 2002-2003 he held the post of RJC Executive VP and earned many public awards for sponsorship and organizing charitable activities in the Jewish community of Russia. The EAJC charged Mr. Raskin with the management of the new complex project “Development”.

**February 20th.** Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh held a press conference in the information center of TASS-Ural on the results of the joint diplomatic mission of the EAJC and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The conference was called “EAJC on Prospects in Relations Between Georgia and Russia”.

**February 20th.** Moscow. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov took part in a presentation of the two-volume edition Children of Abraham, published with the support of the American Jewish Committee and the EAJC. The book presents the history of cohabitation and confrontation between Jews and Muslims.

**February 21st.** Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member Mikhail Oshtrakh took part in the discussion “National stereotypes: how to live with them and should they be fought?” The discussion was initiated by the Regional Studies and Translations department of the University of Humanities; it was led by the rector of the UH, Lev Abramovich Zaks. Also participating in the discussion were head of the Yekaterinburg branch of the Jewish Agency in Russia Asher Uliamperl, U.S. Consul General in Yekaterinburg John Stepanchuk, dean of the UH’s Sociology department Harold Sborovsky, and other scholars.

**February 28th.** Yekaterinburg. As part of the round table discussion on protecting the rights of the participants of the educational process, Mikhail Oshtrakh presented his speech, called “On the necessity of ethno-cultural and religious studies in order to shape tolerant relations in universities and schools”. Lecturer and students of Yekaterinburg universities and school teachers of the Sverdlovsk oblast took part in the round table discussion.

**March 3rd.** Moscow. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov held a broadened council of the FENKA with representatives from 17 regional ethnic and cultural autonomies. Discussed at the meeting were problems of interaction between regional and local Jewish autonomies, and ways to make FENKA a real platform for various Jewish organizations to cooperate.

**March 4th.** Krasnoyarsk. Dov Kofman, chairman of the Beit Tshuva religious Judaic community in Birobidzhan which cooperates closely with the EAJC, met with Boris Boguslavsky, director of the Joint charitable foundation branch in Krasnoyarsk. It was noted that due to the active input of the FENKA Birobidzhan is gradually becoming one of the most dynamic subjects of Jewish life in Russia.

**March 6th.** Astana. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich on behalf of the EAJC sent condolences on the terrorist attack on the Merkaz ha-Rav yeshiva in Jerusalem to the President of Israel and Israeli Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Russia and Ukraine.

**March 13th.** Moscow. EAJC Council of Rabbis general secretary, Chief Rabbi of Moscow, chairman of the rabbinic court Pinkhas Goldschmidt and Rabbi David Yushuvayev held in Moscow's Choral Synagogue a mourning ceremony in memory of the eight young Israelis who died in the terrorist attack on the Merkaz ha-Rav yeshiva.

**March 19th.** Yekaterinburg. EAJC General Council member and ENKAS president Mikhail Oshtakh took an active part in the mass Purim celebrations held by the city's Jewish public.

**April 8th.** Moscow. Moscow's Jewish community center hosted an extended session of the EAJC youth club, organized with the support of the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund (JHF). Present at the session were students of Moscow universities, representatives of the academic society, and a JHF delegation, invited to Moscow by EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov who is a member of the JHF's expert council. The session was led by Artem Fedorchuk, director of the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies, who presented the digital catalogue of the Jewish necropolis in Chufut-Kale (prepared with the aid of the EAJC) and opened the exhibition "Jewish Monuments in the Crimea". There was also a presentation of books issued within the publishing program "EAJC Library".

**April 9th.** Jerusalem. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov and EAJC General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels took part in the international expert conference: "Russia, the Middle East, and Problems of Islam". It was organized by Tzvi Magen, former Israeli ambassador to Ukraine and the Russian Federation, head of the Institute of Euro-Asian Studies (IES) of the Interdisciplinary Center (Hertziya), and Natan Sharansky, board chairman of the Shalem Institute for Strategic Studies (Jerusalem).

**April 11th.** Moscow. A delegation of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) led by David Harris met with Russian leaders of Jewish organizations and representatives of government structures. At the meeting with Gener-

al Secretary Mikhail Chlenov and other leaders of the EAJC, the parties exchanged opinions on the current situation and determined the course of future cooperation.

**April 24th.** Moscow. EAJC Vice-President Yury Raskin and General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov held the first session of the EAJC Directors' Board. Board members from Moscow, Ulyanovsk, and Almaty attended the session.

**April 29th–May 3rd.** Washington. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke at the official opening ceremony of the 15th International Conference of Jewish leaders, arriving from 47 countries. The EAJC delegation, representing the Jewish organizations and communities of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine, was headed by EAJC General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels.

**May 4th.** Moscow. The award ceremony of the 9th all-Russian contest of research works in history for high-school students “Man in History. Russia – 20th Century” took place in the “Na Strastnom” Theatrical Center of the Russian Theater Workers' Union. The contest was organized by the International ‘Memorial’ Society, the D. S. Likhachev International Charitable Foundation, the Russian Local Historians' Union, and the Department of Regional and Local History of the Russian State University for the Humanities. The special EAJC prize for “Best paper on Jewish issues” was given to 11th-year student from Volgograd, T. Krivobokova, who had written about the history of the city's Jewish community and the Kolotilin family who'd played an important part in the life of the community.

**May 12th.** Astana. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Nurlan Ermekbayev, and Israeli Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Kazakhstan Ran Ishay spoke at the official ceremony in honor to the 60th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the Jewish state, and the opening of the new Israeli embassy building in the Kazakhstan capital. The ceremony was held in the Beyt Rakhel synagogue, called after the EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich's mother.

**May 13th.** Jerusalem. EAJC delegation, headed by Alexander Mashkevich, took part in the work of the most impressive conference in the history of Israel – Facing Tomorrow, timed to the 60th anniversary of the Jewish state. The Israeli President Shimon Peres invited to Jerusalem heads of states and governments, leaders of world business, Nobel Prize winners, scholars, and cultural figures.

**May 19th.** Moscow. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov was invited to a formal reception hosted by the Israeli embassy to the Russian Federation

on occasion of the 60th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the State of Israel. Among the participants of the celebration were representatives of the diplomatic corps and the Russian clergy, political and public figures, leaders of Jewish organizations and communities, and numerous journalists.

**May 20th.** Jerusalem. Leaders of the EAJC and the Keren Hayesod Foundation held negotiations on the Foundation's activity in the FSU. Once the negotiations had finished, EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich, who is also President of Keren Hayesod in the FSU, was awarded a prize, established by the Foundation to mark the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel.

**May 21st.** Moscow. Members of Kovcheg, the oldest Russian-Jewish intellectuals' club in Moscow, assembled in the Jewish cultural center "Na Nikitskoy" to celebrate the anniversary of the oldest actress of the Jewish theater, Maria Yefimovna Kotlyarova. The event was hosted by the Kovcheg's president Felix Dektor, and musicologist Zhanna Dozortzeva. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov greeted Ms. Kotlyarova in her native Yiddish and presented her with the EAJC medal.

**May 23rd.** Moscow. Chief Rabbi of Russia, EAJC Council of Rabbis Vice-Chairman Adolf Shayevich opened the presentation in Moscow's Choral Synagogue of a special edition of the *Vokrug Sveta* (Around the World) magazine, published on the eve of the 60th anniversary of Israel.

**May 29th.** Moscow. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov took part in the opening of the exhibition of paintings and drawings "Central Asia – Moscow – Jerusalem in the Work of Jewish Artists". The exhibition was organized with the aid of the EAJC and dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the State of Israel and the 90th anniversary of the State Museum of the East.

**June 17th.** Washington. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich received the honourable Torch of Freedom Award as recognition of his leadership in reviving Jewish life in Eurasia and his participation in the international movement for the rights of Jews in the FSU, at an enlarged session of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCJS) Board in Washington, June 2008. On the same day, USA Congresswoman Shelley Berkeley gave a reception in honour of Alexander Mashkevich, attended by 15 U.S. Congressmen, the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the USA, and other high-ranking individuals.

**June 18th.** Washington. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich and AJC Executive Director David Harris signed a cooperation agreement, stipulating joint representation of Jewish interests at international forums, participation in joint event and programs in Jewish education, as well as monitoring anti-Semitism and aiding restitution of Jewish communal property.

**June 26th.** Tokyo. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich inspected the Jewish community center and synagogue building being erected in the capital of Japan, and said that the work was expected to be finished by Rosh ha-Shana. Alexander Mashkevich spoke on the phone with the head of the Jewish community in Japan, EAJC General Council member Daniel Turk, who was in the USA at that moment.

**June 27th–29th.** Karaganda. The Mitzva Association of Jewish Organizations in Kazakhstan which is part of the EAJC, with the aid of the American Joint Distribution Committee, organized the 4th International Festival of Jewish Children and Youth Art, Freilehe Kinder. The 200-odd participants who had arrived from different FSU countries demonstrated a high professional level.

**June 28th.** Astana. Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan, EAJC Council of Rabbis Chairman Yeshaya Cohen invited the group of U.S. congressmen headed by Helsinki Commission Chairman Alcee Hastings, who had arrived to the capital of Kazakhstan to take part in an OSCE session, to visit the largest synagogue in Central Asia – Beyt Rakhel, named so in honor of the EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich’s mother. In the synagogue, a dialogue took place between rabbis and imams from various cities of the republic.

**June 30th.** Wroclaw. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov took part in the international conference: “Modern Jewish Culture – Diversities and Unities”, organized by the local university and the Oxford Lipman Library. Mr. Chlenov met with Poland’s Chief Rabbi Michael Szudrich and visited Cracow for the opening of the European festival of Jewish culture, held annually in various European cities.

## REPORT ON EAJC PROGRAMS IN 2007–2008

*Eduard Grinberg, Vyacheslav Likhachev,  
Natalya Schmidt*

The programs of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC) are realized by the EAJC Program Management (Kiev, head – Yosif Zissels, program coordinator since summer 2007 – Eduard Grinberg); some programs are coordinated by the Moscow office (head – Mikhail Chlenov, office director – Natalya Schmidt).

In this review we will mention the main programs the EAJC has realized between summer 2007 and summer 2008.

As part of the Community Life Monitoring program the Congress collects information on the lives of Jewish communities in the region. Based on this monitoring, a weekly newsletter of Jewish life in the states of the region was compiled in 2007–2008, and the News section of the EAJC website was refreshed (<http://www.eajc.org>). 2008 saw intensification of work on the contents of the website with particular attention to the Analytics section. Moreover, by the fall of 2008 the new design and format of the website were conceptually developed. The new concept suggests that the EAJC's web-representation be changed from a corporative website to a corporative and news site. In fact, a new informational and analytical portal with daily updates will be created on the basis of the EAJC website. The English version of the portal will be especially important. The new EAJC website was to be launched in the fall of 2008.

In January 2008, on the basis of monitoring by the Expert group on problems of Anti-Semitism under the World Jewish Congress (WJC) FSU Committee (see more on its work below), an analytical report was prepared to sum up the year 2007: “On the main tendencies of anti-Semitic expressions in Australia and Euro-Asian states” (compiling editor – EAJC General Council member Vyacheslav Likhachev). It contained reports on expressions of anti-Semitism in Australia, Belarus, Lithuania, Moldova, New Zea-

land, Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Japan. The report was published in English and Russian.

In the beginning of 2008, the Congress published the fourth issue of the Euro-Asian Jewish Yearbook for the year 5767 by the Jewish calendar (2006/2007 by the Gregorian calendar). The English version of the Yearbook was to be published in the fall of 2008. Like the third issue, this fourth volume was prepared by an editorial board led by the Yearbook's editor in chief Mikhail Chlenov. The fifth issue of the Yearbook (the Jewish year 5768, or 2007/2008) was prepared for print over the year 2008. The editorial board underwent some changes in this period with Semen Charny becoming its executive secretary. Like before, Vyacheslav Likhachev, Vladimir Paley, and Artem Fedorchuk are on the Yearbook's editorial staff. The structure of the publication is traditional. Its first part contains analytical articles by leading scholars on the current state of the Jewry in the states whose communities participate in the Congress. The second part contains reviews on the history and modernity of the Congress' Jewish communities. Finally, the third part is a database of contact information on two and a half thousand Jewish organizations in the region.

The colorful EAJC calendar, published in September 2008 for the year 5769 by the Jewish calendar and dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Israel is very popular in communities. The calendar is illustrated with reproductions of Israel-themed paintings by Euro-Asian artists.

Traditionally, on the threshold of Passover EAJC supplies the Jewish communities of the region with matzos. In February and April 2008, matzos were bought and delivered from Kiev to the Jewish communities of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine. The program managers coordinated the work of organizations producing and delivering the matzos, which were intended to be distributed for free among the needy community members. The Jewish community of Azerbaijan received 2.5 tons of matzos; Armenia – 0.8 tons; Belarus – 3 tons; Georgia – 3.8 tons; Kazakhstan – 9.5 tons; Moldova – 4 tons; Russia – 40 tons; Uzbekistan – 2.5 tons; Ukraine – 14.55 tons (bought and distributed among 159 Jewish organizations and communities). Altogether 80.2 tons of matzos were distributed in the states whose communities are part of the EAJC.

2008 was the first time that the EAJC did not deliver matzos directly to member communities from countries in the EU: Bulgaria, Poland, Slovenia, and Macedonia. These countries are in the Schengen space and it is therefore exceedingly expensive and administratively complicated to deliver matzos to them, so a more rational scheme was applied. The EAJC transferred money

to Bulgaria, Slovenia, and Macedonia, using which the communities ordered the necessary amount of matzos from Israel and had it delivered. Together with the matzos that were bought, community members received greetings from the EAJC. The community of Kirgizstan was supplied with matzos in the same way.

The EAJC provided less support to small communities than in previous years: the Jewish community of Armenia was aided in publishing its newspaper and holding international events; the communities of Moldova, Belarus, and Ukraine received help sending children to EAJC camps in Ukraine; the communities of Mongolia, Slovenia, and Belarus were helped in sending their leaders to WJC General Council sessions.

Like before, the Congress pays significant attention to projects aimed at improving cooperation with various national communities and forming a climate of solidarity and understanding in the countries of the region. One of the programs concerns introducing the topic of the Holocaust into the curricula of comprehensive non-Jewish schools in the FSU.

On May 18–19, 2008, the eighth contest of schoolchildren’s papers “History and Lessons of the Holocaust” was organized in Kiev (Ukraine) by the Ukrainian center of Holocaust history studies, financially supported by the EAJC. 33 pupils from various Ukrainian cities took part in the contest; their papers were selected, reviewed, and approved for defense by the contest jury, comprising of leading historians and methodologists, including: EAJC General Council member, director of the Ukrainian center of Holocaust history studies, Dr. Anatoly Podolsky; executive secretary of the Babi Yar public committee Vitaly Nakhmanovitch; and others.

Traditionally, the EAJC supported the International School on the Holocaust, taking place in Brest (Belarus) in June 2008.

Another program aimed at developing the EAJC’s interethnic and inter-confessional dialogues, traditionally given significant attention, is the international interethnic children’s summer camp Roots of Tolerance. Its concept is unique: not only do the participating teenagers from different national communities get to know the national traditions of their peers, but they actually live each day following a different tradition.

The first session of the camp took place in Odessa (Ukraine) on August 6–26, 2008. 150 children took part in the camp from 13 national communities of Ukraine (Armenian, Crimean-Tatar, Polish, Jewish, Lithuanian, Russian, Greek, Hungarian, Moldovan, etc.). 33 teachers from 12 national communities of Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, worked as counselors. The director of the camp was Sergey Kharakhu, coordinator of the Tolerance

Club in Lvov, supported by the EAJC and the Congress of National Communities of Ukraine.

On August 13th, an action was held at the camp, called “Let Us Protect the Children of South Ossetia, Georgia, and Russia”, aimed to attract the attention of politicians and the general public to the suffering of refugee children, and to show support and compassion for all victims of the war. During the event, children drew messages to the presidents of Georgia and Russia, Mikhail Saakashvili and Dmitry Medvedev. The messages were officially referred to the Russian and Georgian consulates in Odessa.

The second session of the camp was August 13-29, 2008, in the Yasinya settlement (Carpatho-Ukraine). 159 children arrived from Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, representing 11 national communities: Ukrainian, Russian, Jewish, Crimean-Tatar, Polish, German, Tatar, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Armenian, Moldovan, and Romanian. The teaching staff of the camp comprised 28 representatives of national communities. The camp’s director was Natalya Bakulina.

The Moldovan Jewish Congress appealed to the EAJC to help to organize the Roots of Tolerance camp in 2009 in Moldova.

Beside the interethnic Roots of Tolerance camp, the EAJC also supported the Jewish children’s camp called The Roots and Future of Ukrainian Jews (Shorashim), which took place in the aforementioned Yasinya settlement on July 26 – August 8. 107 children from Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova arrived to the Carpathians to broaden their knowledge of Jewish tradition, learn kindness and tolerance. This camp was also led by Natalya Bakulina.

The camp was not disturbed by the flood which affected several western regions of Ukraine. Once Yosif Zissels learned of the flooding, he flew directly to the location of the camp. Having ascertained that the inconvenience inflicted by the natural disaster was not urgent, he informed the children’s families that the EAJC Shorashim camps would continue working as planned.

One of the Congress’ constant priorities is supporting scholarly and educational projects on the Jewish civilization. By 2008 the EAJC has become one of the main donor organizations supporting research and academic programs in Jewish Studies.

On January 22–23, 2008, the Congress helped to hold the international conference “The Phenomenon of the Kultur-Liga in the Context of the Age”, organized by the Center of Jewish Studies by the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA; Center directed by EAJC General Council member Leonid Finberg). 35 scholars from Ukraine, Russia, Israel, the USA, and

France took part in the conference; a collection of its material is intended to publish.

On January 29–31, 2008, like in all previous years, the Congress was among the sponsors of the fifteenth Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference in Jewish Studies in Moscow, organized by the Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization “Sefer” whose director is EAJC General Council member Dr. Victoria Mochalova. The granted funds were used to pay the travel and accommodation expenses of the participants from the FSU. Over 200 scholars from 55 cities in various countries (FSU, Europe, Israel, USA) took part in the conference.

On July 7–18, 2008, the Congress supported the Summer Field School in Jewish Studies and the epigraphic expedition, both organized in Bakhchisaray (Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine) by the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies (director – Artem Fedorchuk, coordinator in Ukraine – Vyacheslav Likhachev). Approximately 50 students, pupils, researchers, and teachers from various cities in Israel, Russia, the USA, and Ukraine, took part in the program. Beside some educational activities, the school continued the important work of documenting and preserving the medieval monuments of the Crimean Jewish Diaspora. The main research goal of the expedition was to finish documenting the medieval Chufut-Kale Jewish cemetery by Bakhchisaray.

On August 17–24, 2008, Bukovina Jews History and Culture Week took place in Chernovtsy (Ukraine) with active financial and organizational support from the EAJC. Yosif Zissels was its main organizer. Mikhail Chlenov participated in all the events and forums of the Week. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich greeted the conference participants. The highlight of the Week was the international conference “Yiddish Language and Culture” on August 18–23: over 40 specialists and amateurs of Yiddish arrived from Europe, the USA, Israel, and the FSU.

The Week included the presentation of the Bukovina Jews Culture and History Museum and its first exposition, featuring, among others, a unique document – a Hebrew prayer for Franz I, compiled in 1792. This rarity was bought at an auction in Israel. The EAJC was the main sponsor of the museum.

The Jewish Studies Center of the NaUKMA published with the support of the EAJC the monograph by Dr. Boris Khaimovitch: *Toil of Our Hands to Glorify: Murals in the Beyt Tfila Benyamin Synagogue of Chernovtsy*.

As considerable trials befell the region in 2008, it is fitting to note the humanitarian missions all the EAJC structures cooperated and coordinated to perform.

In August 2008, the EAJC together with the JDC decided to offer humanitarian aid to the regions of western Ukraine and Moldova which had suffered from unprecedented flooding.

In August and September, aid was organized for the refugees in the armed conflict area in the Caucasus. After consulting the Congress' vice-presidents, Alexander Mashkevich ordered for a \$70,000 line of credit to be opened, to finance the EAJC's humanitarian actions in aid of refugees from the war zone. Before the finances granted by the EAJC management arrived, payments were made from the budget of its Moscow and Kiev offices. The help was mainly channeled through EAJC representatives in Vladikavkaz and Tbilisi. Yosif Zissels was made responsible for coordinating the humanitarian aid. A Refugee Aid Committee was formed, which kept political neutrality, took no sides in the conflict, and only got involved in solving humanitarian tasks.

Since the first days of the armed conflict the EAJC and the Federal Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy of Russia (general director – EAJC Audit Commission member Evgeniya Mikhaleva) collected data about the fate of Jews who found themselves in the war zone in South Ossetia. Those Tskhinvalian Jews as were discovered as refugees in Vladikavkaz received aid.

In Georgia the EAJC helped Jewish refugees from Gori. Minister of refugees and accommodation Tamar Martiashvili on behalf of the Georgian government thanked EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich and his vice-presidents for the humanitarian aid provided for the refugees since the beginning of the war conflict.

In September 2008 after meeting with refugees and Committee members, as well as discussing the results of the EAJC representatives' visit to the war zone, it was decided to continue providing humanitarian aid, with the list of the needy including people who stayed in Gori as well as those of the refugees staying in Georgian cities other than Tbilisi. The Moscow office of the EAJC also helped Tskhinvalian refugees who settled in the Russian cities of Mozdok and Vladikavkaz. Over 250 refugees were aided altogether.

Besides aiding the refugees, the EAJC is planning to financially support the repair and reconstruction of the partially destroyed synagogue in Tbilisi. Yosif Zissels is the coordinator of the renovation of the Ashkenazi synagogue. He prepared the contract between the EAJC and the community, checked the project and construction documentation, hired an experienced builder to conduct engineering supervision, and held the necessary meetings with the government, as a result of which on September 8, 2008 the Georgian cabinet council resolved to grant the community the right of using the synagogue building for 25 years. The repairs began in mid-September 2008.

Throughout 2008 the Congress with active participation of its president Alexander Mashkevich was involved in helping to solve the problem which has existed between the Breslov World Center (Israel) and the Chance enterprise (Ukraine) since 2002. As a result of this almost-six-year-old conflict, the following property of the Breslov World Center in Uman (Ukraine) was arrested by court order: the grave of Rabbi Nakhman, which is a pilgrimage shrine for Breslov Hasidim, and the building of the largest synagogue in Europe, still under construction. Interference on the part of the EAJC and financial support organized by Alexander Mashkevich led in late August of 2008 to an out-of-court settlement between the parties, and the process of liberating the aforementioned property has begun. Coordinating this help was executive vice-president of the Congress Fyodor Osinin with legal support provided in Ukraine by Yosif Zissels, who drew up a contract of support to the Breslov World Center in late June and signed it on behalf of the EAJC.

A number of Congress programs are realized by the Moscow office (director – Natalya Schmidt) under the guidance of EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov.

Throughout 2008, the Moscow office was the base where the Expert group on problems of anti-Semitism, created by the initiative of the World Jewish Congress FSU Committee, continued its work (its co-chairmen are Mikhail Chlenov and Haim Chesler). The group members continuously monitor expressions of anti-Semitism in Russia and Ukraine and publish the results in a monthly newsletter. The experts and the EAJC develop analytic material which they offer to governmental institutions and interested organizations, participate in court proceedings, etc.

This year, like the previous years, the EAJC's Moscow office was in constant cooperation with the local governmental structures. EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov regularly took part in meetings and consultations on various problems in the life of national communities with the Russian Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federation Council, and Coordination Council of Russia's National and Cultural Autonomies.

The Moscow office has a publishing program, printing the following books under the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress Library logo this year: *The Jewish Myth in Slavic Culture* by O. V. Belova and V. Y. Petrukhin and *Children of Abraham*, a two-volume edition by Reuven Firestone and Khalid Durán.

This year the Moscow office of the EAJC with the support of the Dutch Humanitarian Fund has initiated the EAJC Youth Club, coordinated by Mikhail Vogman.

The Moscow office of the EAJC also supports programs carried out by the local organizations. The following have received support:

- Center of Jewish Studies of the Russian State University of Humanities, to publish the materials of the conference Yiddish Language and Culture in the USSR;

- Keren Kayemet le-Israel Foundation (KKL), to perform their mandated activities;

- “Memorial” Society, to hold a children’s contest;

- Moscow’s Jewish community home, to implement programs;

- Roots magazine, to publish the magazine;

- International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies, to organize a summer field school;

- Institute for Euro-Asian Studies, to hold the conference “Russia, the Middle East, and the Challenge of Radical Islam”.

The EAJC was also one of the sponsors of the exhibition of paintings and drawings “Central Asia – Moscow – Jerusalem in the Work of Jewish Artists”.

This year, the EAJC initiated a new project: Development, led by Yury Raskin. The main objective of this project is to broaden the business audience of the Congress, and to apply its financial, professional, spiritual, and intellectual potential to the effective realization of the organization’s mandated tasks. To this end, a Directors’ Board was formed by the EAJC, presided over by Leonid Gandelman and currently comprising:

Sergey Abuladze (Zhezqazghan)

Victor Gaft (Moscow)

Boris Gorelik (Nizhniy Novgorod)

Valery Davidson (Ulyanovsk)

Mikhail Zelman (Moscow)

Yury Zelvensky (Tomsk)

Felix Kazakov (Kiev)

Grigory Poltorak (Moscow)

Larisa Ryabchenko (Moscow)

Inna Sergiyenko (Kiev)

Mikhail Skoblionok (Kazan)

Mikhail Khanukayev (Moscow)

Vladimir Shpielfogel (Kiev)

The foreign policy initiatives of the EAJC included participation in the following events:

On January 27–29 an EAJC delegation led by President Alexander Mashkevich took part in a session of the WJC General Council together with over

130 delegates and observers from the whole world. The delegation included Vice-President Mark Shabad, General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov, General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels, as well as General Council members Evgeniya Lvova (Russia, St. Petersburg), Boris Gersten (Belarus), Jemal Ajiashvili (Georgia), Andrey Kozhar (Slovenia), et al.

A. Mashkevich took part in a session of the WJC Steering Committee the day before, where the WJC General Council agenda was approved, Michael Schneider was appointed WJC Secretary-General, and Kobi Benatoff was named new Chairman of the WJC Policy Council.

The Steering Committee decided to call a WJC General Assembly in 2009, whose agenda will be determined by the next General Council, of whose time, place, and format the members of the WJC will be notified by the Steering Committee in due course.

During the Steering Committee session the following issues were discussed: problems of the world Jewry induced by the position of the Iranian government; problems of international terrorism and anti-Semitism; and the prospects of relations between Israel and the Jewish organizations and communities of the Diaspora. The WJC's protest against the UN-planned anti-racist conference Durban II was discussed separately.

The joint diplomatic mission of the EAJC (led by Alexander Mashkevich) and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (led by Malcolm Hoenlein) began its work in Tbilisi on February 13th. It was the first time that over a hundred Euro-Asian Jewish leaders and their American colleagues visited Georgia.

Yosif Zissels led several sessions of the EAJC General Council, where community leaders exchanged opinions on the essential issues of Jewish life in Euro-Asia, emphasizing especially the problem of the Ashkenazi synagogue in Tbilisi, whose status the Georgian government had promised to restore. At a joint meeting of the General Council and the American leaders of Jewish organizations, EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov presented EAJC medals and diplomas to Guram Batiashvili and rabbi Ariel Levin for their input into the development of Jewish life in Georgia.

In the course of the intensive program there was a meeting with President of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvily, who delighted the gathering by saying that David Ben-Gurion was his hero, and that he felt at home in Israel; a meeting with Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze, who remembered the letter of 18 Georgian Jews which became an incentive for the repatriation of Jews from the FSU; meetings with Prime Minister Lado Gurgendze and the main ministers of his cabinet: Minister of Conflict Resolution Temur Yakobashvili,

Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of Defence, of Economic Development, of Energy, of Euro-Atlantic Integration, and of Education, chairmen of the committees of the Georgian Parliament, ombudsman Sozar Subari.

There were separate important meetings with Patriarch of Georgia Ilia II and U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John Teft, presided over by EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov, who presented the Patriarch with a memorial gift, emphasizing in his speech the Patriarch's great services to the task of keeping Georgia's social life in peace and accord.

Emissaries of leading U.S. Jewish organizations David Benesh (Nativ) and Irina Lipski (JDC) held briefings; the guests were introduced to the work of the local branch of the Sochnut Jewish Agency, the Or Avner School, and the offices of Joint and Hillel. They also met with the Israeli Ambassador to Georgia Shabtai Tzur.

On February 26th, Mikhail Chlenov spoke at a plenary meeting of the Global Forum on Anti-Semitism, led negotiations with the Keren Hayesod leadership, and together with Yosif Zissels participated in a session of the Directors' Board of the Jewish Agency, where he spoke on the state of the communities in the FSU. Russian Ambassador to Israel Pyotr Stegny spoke at the same meeting.

EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov took part in a presentation of the two-volume edition Children of Abraham, published in the DAAT/Znanie publishing house (Moscow-Jerusalem) with the support of the Joint and the EAJC.

The conference "Russia, the Middle East, and Problems of Islam" was organized in Jerusalem on April 8-9 by the Institute of Euro-Asian Studies (Hertzliya, director – Tzvi Magen) and the Shalem Institute for Strategic Studies (Jerusalem, director – Natan Sharansky), with the support of the Interdisciplinary Center (Hertzliya) and the EAJC.

The EAJC was represented at the conference by its General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov (who spoke at one of the meetings) and General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels. Ukrainian Ambassador Yury Scherbak was also present at the conference; he discussed with Yosif Zissels, Tzvi Magen, and Natan Sharansky prospects of cooperation in organizing a similar conference on the relations between Ukraine and Israel in the fall of 2008.

On April 24th, EAJC Vice-President Yury Raskin and General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov held the first session of the EAJC Directors' Board.

The 15th International Conference of Jewish Leaders was held in Washington between April 29th and May 3rd as part of the Annual Assembly of the American Jewish Committee. The AJC is over 100 years old and is one of the

leading Jewish organizations in the U.S.; it holds its annual event in the shape of a large-scale international forum with days-long plenary and group meetings with notable acting politicians from various states. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke at the official opening ceremony; Prime Minister of France François Fillon and U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen spoke at the official reception which was timed to the 60th anniversary of Israel.

Hundreds of Jewish representatives from 47 states took part in the conference, the largest delegations arriving from the USA, Canada, Israel, and Germany. The EAJC delegation, representing the Jewish organizations and communities of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine, was headed by EAJC General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels.

The Presidential Conference – Facing Tomorrow, timed to the 60th anniversary of the Jewish state, organized by Israeli President Shimon Peres, was opened in the International Convention Center (Binyanei ha-Uma) on May 13th. The most impressive conference in the history of Israel gathered in Jerusalem heads of states and governments, leaders of world business, Nobel Prize winners, scholars, and cultural figures.

Heads of 13 European and American states arrived to take part in the forum, including President of the United States George Bush, President of France Nicolas Sarkozy, President of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili, former president of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma, former president of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, now Special Envoy of the Quartet on the Middle East Tony Blair, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany Joschka Fischer, Chairman of the Council of Federation of the Russian Federation Sergey Mironov, media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, former U.S. State Secretary Henry Kissinger, President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko, President of Poland Lech Kaczyński, Noble prize winner and former President of the Czech Republic Václav Havel, Nobel prize winner Elie Wiesel, and other high-ranking guests.

An EAJC delegation, headed by Alexander Mashkevich, took part in the work of the Presidential Conference, with Executive Vice-President Fyodor Osinin, General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov, and General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels.

EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich and American Jewish Committee Executive Director David Harris signed a cooperation agreement in Washington on June 17th. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to the United States were present at the

ceremonial subscription and supported the joining of efforts of the two well-known organizations in their greetings. The agreement stipulates that the EAJC and the AJC should jointly represent Jewish interests at international forums, participate in joint events and programs in Jewish education, as well as monitor anti-Semitism and aid restitution of Jewish communal property, and other projects. The text of the document states that the agreement does not restrict the parties from cooperating with other international or regional Jewish organizations.

On June 23rd, EAJC General Secretary Professor Mikhail Chlenov paid a visit to Poland in order to contact the Jewish community which is an associated member of the EAJC. He spoke on Types of Jewish Identity at the international conference “Modern Jewish Culture – Diversities and Unities” in Wrocław, organized by the local university and the Oxford Lipman Library. Then he met with Poland’s chief rabbi Michael Szudrich and discussed the EAJC policy regarding Eastern European Jewish communities, the condition and issues of Polish Jewry, and the course of future cooperation with the EAJC. In Cracow Mr. Chlenov took part in the grand opening of the European festival of Jewish culture, held annually in various European cities.

On September 17th, an EAJC delegation led by President Alexander Mashkevich arrived to the International Conference of Jewish Leaders and Philanthropists in Paris, dedicated to Israel’s 60th anniversary. This extraordinarily significant forum was initiated by two world-famous and influential organizations: Keren Hayesod – United Israel Appeal and United Jewish Communities – Federations of North America.

## A JEWISH HOUSE IN A EURASIAN CITY

V.B. Roskin  
(Kazan)

*Contemporary society is multifaced and mixed. Today, the western world, with its gigantic megapolises, is sometimes described as “new paganism” or “the confusion of Babylon”, where people live side by side but do not know each other. Ignorance and resentment of “alien” traditions, religion and culture lead to complete or partial oblivion of one’s own traditions. All this has a pernicious effect on interethnic and interconfessional relations.*

However, people have not only voluntarily got used to something “other” and “different” but they have also worked out, and keep improving, certain common social, juridical and moral rules and laws – i.e., codes of conduct for community life.

In this situation, it is very important to cultivate, carefully and rationally, any relations carrying interconfessional and interethnic peace and concord. As we see it, this kind of practice can be found in the Republic of Tatarstan.

We shall not touch upon, in detail, the geographical and ethno-confessional uniqueness of Tatarstan: we shall only make a few, but important, remarks.

The objective factors of this uniqueness, its geographical location being one of them, are obvious: Tatarstan, situated on the juncture of the East and the West, represents the Eurasian region with a multitude of cultures, traditions and confessions. At the same time, it is as obvious that this multiform cohabitation of cultures and religions may lead to confrontation. Therefore, it is necessary to create conditions for a peaceful coexistence and development of different ethnic groups living within the same territory.

In the USSR, the beginning of the 90s of the 20th century was marked by “the parade of sovereignties”. The former Soviet republics turned into independent states, the autonomous republics became national republics

and began to speak, voiceferously, about their sovereignty. Tatarstan, to be sure, was one of the leading singers in this chorus.

At the same time, there began to uproariously develop the national identity of minority ethnic groups who up to then had not had any national-state territory of their own. Though possessing their national traditions, culture and language, these minority groups had been actively mixed with the titular ethnic groups (those possessing their own national-state entities) or those predominantly more numerous (such as the Russians, for example). The Jews have been and still are one of such minority ethnic groups.

Despite the fact that the Jews appeared in Tatarstan comparatively late (the 20s of the 19th century), by the end of the century, they were, initially, a well-organized quite numerous (about 2000 people) group, the backbone of which was formed by resigned cantonist soldiers. It was a non-homogenous community, not devoid of inner contradictions.

At the beginning of the 90s of the 20th century, the Jewish population of Tatarstan comprised about 10 000 people. It has always been (and still is despite the departure for Israel) quite an active and influential community whose opinion is always taken into consideration by the state bodies striving to pursue a balanced national policy. The Tatarstan 2002 census recorded 3480 Jews, but the heads of the local community tend to think the figure as being too low and not reflecting the actual size of the community.

In 1997, after lasting talks between the initiative group of the Republic's and the city's influential Jews and the Kazan Administration, the latter handed over to the Hebrew community, for use, the building of the synagogue which had been acquired by the Kazan Jews way back in 1915.

In 2001, on the grounds of the expert opinion of the History Institute under the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, which proved the legal succession of the contemporary Hebrew community, the latter won back by court action, from the Ministry of Land and Property Relations, the building of the synagogue into ownership.<sup>1</sup>

In 1998, in Kazan, at High School No. 12, there appeared the first classes with an ethno-cultural Jewish component. Eventually, the classes turned into a school with a high level of teaching and equipage, and what is most important – with a wonderful warm atmosphere. The school began to attract pupils who wanted to be educated nowhere else, and there were not only Jews among them. The popularity of the school was growing.

But as the school grew, not everything was always smooth and even. After the fire in 2001, the city authorities tried to disembody the school explaining that it was impossible to renovate it in a short time. But there were

protests on the part of the Tatarstan Jewish Ethno-Cultural Autonomy (President Michael Skoblionok), the community, the parents and the city's general public backed up by the Russian Jewish Congress, the embassies of Israel and the USA and a number of other organizations. Thanks to the efforts of TJENCA, the school was renovated in a short time and by the decision of the court remained within the framework of the city educational system. In 2008, the school, headed by its Principal Olga Troupp, broadly celebrated its anniversary. The School is really one of the best Jewish schools in Russia and the CIS.

It is important to emphasize the considerable contribution to the growth of influence of the Jewish community made by the Tatarstan Jewish Ethno-Cultural Autonomy established in 2001. While the Hebrew community and the Jewish community charitable center Hesed Moshe are involved, first and foremost, in organizing the Jewish religious and secular life inside the community, TJENCA, besides supervising the work of the Jewish school and the University Center, handles the liaison of the community with state bodies and other ethno-cultural formations of the Republic.

In 1999, there was organized an experimental course in Judaism within the framework of the Continuing Education Department at the Kazan State University. The course was quite popular, and, in July, 2000, the Kazan State University Center of the History and Culture of the Jewish People (with principal Vladimir Roskin, and Eugene Chiglintsev as scientific supervisor and head of the Historical Department) was opened. The Center is a formal subdivision, and the specialty "Judaism" is one of the four major specialties of the University Historical Department.

It should be mentioned that before the opening of the Center, some Jewish religious activists wanted to see only Jews among its students. But the Center, from the very beginning of its existence, has always been and is today academic in its essence and therefore comes out against Jewish history being studied by the Jews alone; it is just as absurd as France being studied only by Frenchmen, etc. Therefore, it is only natural and logical that among the students majoring in Judaism we can find Tartars, Russians and Jews, to be sure.

How does the interaction of the Jewish community with the Republic's and city's administrations, and with other ethnic formations actually work?

The Jewish community, as an "ethnic entity", officially participates in events held by the republic and city authorities. The heads of the community (both religious and secular) are invited to the honorary presidiums of different sessions, sittings and round tables, etc.; Jewish music-dancing groups and soloists take part in festive meetings dedicated to the Day of the Republic

and the Day of the City, etc. This, mainly, takes place within the framework of the RT Association of ethno-cultural groups – an official public organization of ethnic Diasporas transformed, in November, 2007, into the Assembly of the Peoples of Tatarstan under the presidency of Farid Mukhametshin (chairman of the Tatarstan State Council). It should be noted that Anna Smolina, a representative of the Jewish community, was invited to the presidium of the November, 2007 Congress of the Peoples of Tatarstan. Anna Smolina is the head of the Jewish community charitable center Hesed Moshe and a member of the Public Chamber of Tatarstan.

In return, representatives of state authorities take part in significant events of Jewish life, which includes various forms of assistance. Thus, the mayor of Kazan Ilсур Metshin made a speech at the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Jewish school and presented the school with gifts.

During city celebrations of significant Jewish holidays, at the Gala Concerts of the Yuriy Pliner International Contest-Festival of Jewish culture held during these holidays, as well as at the Leonid Sonts contest of amateur performers of Jewish music and dances conducted as part of this Festival, representatives of state authorities publicly address the Jewish community with holiday greetings. Thus, the former Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs Renat Nabiev and Rabbi Itzhak Gorelik together lit the Hanukkah candle at one of the festive concerts. It should be pointed out that the Tatarstan Ministry of Culture never denied the community financial or any other kind of assistance in arranging contest-festivals of Jewish culture.

It is significant that inter-confessional contacts are also encouraged in Kazan and the Republic: one of the first people to financially support the Hebrew community of Kazan was the imam-khatib of the Nurulla mosque Abdulla hazrat Galiullin, who allotted money for the restoration of the synagogue.

However, it would be wrong to state that mutual respect and tolerance between Jews and non-Jews are only observed on the official level: various ethno-confessional bodies are in direct contact with one another without any intermediaries on the part of official authorities. For example, folk performance teams of non-Jewish diasporas of the Republic almost always take part in the aforementioned contest-festivals along with Jewish performers. What is more, on many occasions, the non-Jewish groups have been laureates and winners of the contest-festival.

The aforementioned Jewish school plays quite an active role in implementing the idea of inter-ethnic cooperation. We can mention a number of extra-curricular projects which promote a close and informal communion of Jewish and Tartar pupils. In our opinion, the most impressive of them are the

“Learning Tolerance” and “Book. Culture. Tolerance” projects, which are realized together with the Tolerance Center “Povolzhskiy Mir” (the Volga Realm).

The “Learning Tolerance” project, designed by Ms. Valentina Roskina, involves joint celebration of ethno-religious holidays. The Jewish children invited the pupils of a Tartar (Muslim) gymnasium to the celebration of the Tu B'Shvat holiday; they told their guests about the holiday, put up turns, and, in the end, all together, planted herbs in flower-pots. The children still remember the activities held at Pesah when the pupils of the Jewish school told their guests about prophet Moses and the Exodus from Egypt, etc. Just as interesting and significant were the return visits of Jewish children to the Tartar gymnasium, where they learnt about the Muslim holiday Kurban Bayram and the national Tartar Sabantuy.

Also very interesting is the “Book. Culture. Tolerance” project designed by Vladimir Yurinov involving both senior schoolchildren and students. The project consists in arranging, by young representatives of different diasporas and confessions, literary-musical gatherings in the course of which people learn about some feature of ethnic or religious culture. The Jewish youth center Afifon was an active participant in such parties held at the Scientific Library of the Kazan State University. Besides the Jewish gathering, there were held Muslim, Georgian, German and other parties of contemporary poetry of multi-national Kazan, as well as the “Kazan Forum” – the international contest of poetical translation.

On the whole, we can conclude that the process of resolving the “Jewish issue” in a predominantly Muslim Republic (out of 1300 registered religious communities there are 1000 Muslim ones) can be described as well-balanced. It is gratifying to know that apart from the official level of interaction (the authorities with the Jewish community), there is also an informal one (community with community), which, in our opinion, is no less important. It is clear that the further efforts on both levels, the state authorities and the community, are indispensable for a more effective interaction of different ethno-confessional groups in Tatarstan.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that in the synagogue building there is not only a hall for prayer, a room for the rabbi, etc., but there are also premises for secular Jewish organizations: the Hesed Moshe community charitable center, the RJC delegation and the Youth Center. Hereinafter, we shall use the word ‘Hebrew’ when referring to the religious community, while other organizations shall be called ‘Jewish’.

# POLITICS

## ISRAEL – RUSSIA: 60 YEARS OF RELATIONS

*Tsvi Magen  
(Jerusalem)*

### INTRODUCTION

Already 60 years have passed, from the time of formation of the state of Israel, that the complicated story of relations between Russia and Israel has been unfolding. These relations are known to be anything but simple, and it is only during last 20 years that they have been developing fairly successfully.

Though bilateral cooperation does not always fully meet the existing potential, one tends to believe in its further dynamic development under any future regional and global realities.

During the last couple of years, in policy-making and academic circles there has been going on quite an intensive discussion on Russia-Israel relations. This article is an attempt to sum up certain aspects of the development of these relations from the Israeli point of view. The first part, which serves as a historical background, deals with the period of 1948–1988, while the second part considers the last 20 years beginning with 1988.

The article focuses on the main, from the Israeli point of view, aspects of bilateral relations:

- 1) diplomatic relations;
- 2) attitude to the Jewish Diaspora and the impact of this issue on the whole set of relations.
- 3) Russia's foreign policy in the Middle East, as viewed in Israel;
- 4) practical aspects of bilateral relations in terms of trade, economy and culture.

It is clear that most of the problems related to Russian-Israeli cooperation can also be attributed to the former Soviet republics, but we have no possibility to cover all the themes in this article.

## I. THE PERIOD of 1948–1988

### **Bilateral relations**

The beginning of that period, which coincided with the proclamation of the Jewish State, was signified by mutual goodwill. The Soviet Union was at the outset of the formation of the Jewish State and encouraged its victory in the war for independence. But the support of Israel did not last long – from 1948 to 1951, then there was an abrupt chill in the relations which was followed by their breach in 1953.

On the whole, these rather cool relations lasted till the war of 1967 and were unilaterally broken off by the USSR (and by the whole Communist bloc, with the exception of Rumania). The reason for it was the emotional reaction to the defeat of the Arabs which was, most likely, considered by the USSR as its own defeat.

The breach of diplomatic relations lasted for more than 20 years up to the change in the political course during the time of perestroika.

This lasting period was signified by direct confrontation of the USSR and Israel, with the presence of the USSR military forces in the region of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and was accompanied by tough rhetoric in the international arena.

### **The Jewish Diaspora**

The support of the Jewish Diaspora is one of the main principles of the State of Israel policy. It is only natural that this kind of stand, as well as having contacts with the Jews of the Diaspora, may bring about specific complications in external relations. The USSR was no exception in this sense; besides it considered this phenomenon as interference in its domestic policy (which was not always adequately assessed in Israel).

At the end of the 1940s – beginning of the 1950s, the reaction of the Soviet authorities to the ill-formed, in their opinion, relations with Israel was a crackdown on the elite of the Jewish Diaspora in the USSR, which, in its turn, brought about the angry reaction of the Israeli.

The internal policy of the USSR in the last months of Stalin's rule and in the period of 1967–1988 was characterized by growing persecution of the Jewish minority.

The negative attitude to the Diaspora was worsened by the 'comprehensive approach' worked out in the USSR which interlinked the internal 'Jewish question' with the external 'Israeli question'.

This policy aroused a response reaction both of the Jews in the USSR who began their fight for freedom of repatriation, and the Jews in Israel who joined the fight together with western Jewish communities.

### **Foreign policy in the Middle East**

After a short period of friendly relations during the first years of existence of the State of Israel, the USSR chose a new policy in the Middle East having given preference to the Arab side. This strategic choice meant an active support of the Arab countries including military, diplomatic, financial and ideological issues.

The policy afforded the Arabs a strategic umbrella which implied the rearmament of Egypt and Syria after each defeat of theirs, backed up by threat of interference in the military actions in case of a crushing defeat of their clientele.

Naturally, this kind of approach tilted the balance of power in the region and enabled the Arab states, during the life span of a whole generation, to hold wars against Israel (1956, 1967, 1968–1970, 1973, 1982) and to rearm after another defeat avoiding the necessity of starting peace talks.

As a result, the long-drawn-out Arab-Israeli conflict became a constant 'hot spot' in the West-East cold war confrontation.

At the same time, though supported by the USA, Israel never joined any anti-Soviet alliances in the Middle East or any other regions.

### **The climate of relations**

The first waves of Aliyah arriving even before the formation of the State of Israel mainly came from Russia; they were the ones who laid the foundation of the future state determining its culture and outlook. Thus, the first generation of the state founders gave preference to a socialist, partially, Soviet model of society and state building.

Nevertheless, the two countries went different ways preserving the feeling of mutual disappointment: the Soviet side was disappointed by Israel's choice of its foreign policy, while the Israeli side couldn't put up with the persecution of the Jewish Diaspora in the USSR.

These persecutions, in a somewhat masked form, continued during the whole period under survey alongside the change in the attitude to Israel, depending on the relations between the USSR and the USA.

The persecution of the Jewish Diaspora, combined with the anti-Israeli foreign policy in the Middle East, in its turn, brought about a matter-of-course worsening of relations and aroused resentment against the USSR on the part

of Israel. But even at that time, Israeli society harbored warm feelings in regard to Russia.

## II. THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS

### **Bilateral relations**

The events in the USSR known as ‘perestroika’, alongside other initiatives of the Soviet leadership brought about in 1988 a change in the political course in regard to Israel, as a result of which diplomatic relations between the USSR and Israel were resumed in a series of steps.

After many years of tough confrontation, the building-up of bilateral relations had to be, virtually, started from scratch overcoming different political, organizational and emotional obstacles. All this took place in the last years of the existence of the USSR characterized by the chaos of the Empire disintegration against the background of growing cynicism, national conflicts, economic decay and pessimism. It is clear that the same processes were repeated in the states formed on the post-Soviet territory.

Under these difficult conditions Israel had to build up and develop relations both with Russia and all the new independent states.

The first decade of this activity may be characterized as a positive step of building up multilateral relations, which entered the stage of regular development after the starting period of set-backs and of resolving specific tasks.

The most important breakthrough took place in the first years of perestroika when a treaty-legal foundation was laid and important results were achieved in the commercial and economic sphere. By the end of the first decade, the relations with Russia somewhat worsened, which was caused by a certain shift of emphasis introduced by the then Russian authorities (mainly, on account of Russia’s rapprochement with some Middle East regimes and its position in the international arena).

With the beginning of the new millennium, in the context of a gradual large-scale revision of Russia’s foreign policy, its stand in regard to Israel was again (and quite significantly) changed. As a result, Russian foreign policy acquired a more distinct and active development.

Russia, naturally, has its own strategic and economic interests in the region. One mustn’t forget about the existence of a significant Muslim community in the country. For all that, the process of rapprochement and a certain thaw in the relations between Russia and Israel did take place, and it was followed by the Russian Federation assuming certain obligations on the Middle East settlement.

## **The Jewish Diaspora**

As has been noted, the issues of the Jewish Diaspora and repatriation to Israel have always been predominant in Israel's foreign policy since the moment of its appearance, despite certain complications in the relations with other countries which arose as a result of this approach.

Help to the Jewish Diaspora in the USSR persecuted by the authorities and fighting for its right to repatriation was certainly Israel's first, though not only, objective. It was this that Israel's main efforts were aimed at during first years after renewal of diplomatic relations.

Though emigration bans were lifted, a certain tension and lack of trust still lingered in the air for some time. There was no certainty that the new political course would continue; anti-Semitic outbursts in the USSR and then in Russia and other countries, the former Soviet Republics, which were part of the then social and political scene, only enhanced these apprehensions. The coup attempts of 1991 and 1993 did not add to the feel of stability either, while the rumors about the possible ban of Aliyah sounded quite credible and urged people to accelerate emigration.

Only later, after having made sure that the situation in Russia and other countries of the CIS has stabilized and that there was a decline in the number of people wanting to emigrate, did Israel change its priorities.

The outcome of this process may be summed up as a mutual benefit both for Israel and Russia. The great Aliyah has proved to become an important factor in the development of Israel, while for Russia and other countries of the CIS it served as a bridge to mutual understanding and further development of bilateral relations.

## **Foreign policy in the Middle East**

The second, and later even the first, important priority of Israel was the foreign policy of Russia and that of the former Soviet Republics in the Middle East.

Considering new realities, among which are Israel's own rather limited possibilities, Russia's policy in the Middle East has become more cautious and balanced.

In the beginning, after the renewal of relations, Israel was looked upon as a regional state and a strategic partner of the USA. It was considered that Israel could be instrumental in establishing contacts with the USA and the West and that it could help Russia become an influential participant in international activity on settlement of the Middle East problems. Russia's paramount advantage as a middleman was its capability to carry out par-

allel talks with all the opponents. Though well-disposed to Israel, Russia, nevertheless had not neglected its interests in Iran, Iraq, Syria and other countries. Separate relations were kept up with Iran, and the latter was given help in acquiring nuclear technologies (contrary to the stands of Israel and the USA). Russia continued supplying armaments to the countries conflicting with Israel, while exercising contacts along the Palestinian line.

At the same time, Russia has become a co-sponsor to the settlement process in the Middle East having managed to find its bearings in the new, not too simple for Russia, environment and to strengthen its position in the region. Lately, there has appeared a more balanced and positive, in regard to the Jewish state, approach which is highly appreciated in Israel.

### **Cooperation in the economic sphere**

Economy has very soon become an essential component of bilateral relations. But despite the mutual interest and considerable potential, the trade and economic relations are developing at a slow pace. The most success was achieved as early as in the first years after the renewal of diplomatic relations<sup>1</sup>, which was followed by a decline.

We can register progress in such spheres as military and technical cooperation, aircraft industry, telecommunications, professional and medical equipment, chemical and agricultural industries, and industrial and transport construction.

Among negative points hindering a more profound development of these ties we can mention the difference in economic, trade and legal standards, lack of regulating documents and the retardation of Russian business standards.

There also exists mutual mistrust – not always well-grounded – a remnant of the past. As a result, the general volume of cooperation is estimated in the ballpark of two billion dollars, which, clearly, does not measure up to the capabilities of the two sides, while a continuous stay at this insignificant level signals stagnation. It may also be accounted for by lack of political will on the part of the two sides.

The presently fast growing Russian market, just like the markets of other countries on the post-Soviet territory, arouses respective interest of Israeli manufacturers. At the same time, quite noticeable is the eagerness of Russia and other countries to tune up the development of high technologies with the help of Israel.

Summing up the development of economic relations, it should be noted that with the growth of mutual interest, manufacturers put out considerable

efforts to promote cooperation. Absence of a language barrier and the agreement abolishing visa requirements also facilitate the process.

### **Cultural ties**

Though this realm of Russia-Israel relations may appear to be of secondary importance, it holds a special place with the historical background and the waves of Aliyah, as a result of which the immigrants from the former USSR make up 20% of Israel's population.

The years of friction and confrontation in the Middle East, alongside with the persecution of the Jewish Diaspora and the encouragement of xenophobia, worked out their own stereotypes. The Soviet Union looked upon Israel as the center of a Jewish world system which had an excessive impact on the political and financial structures in the West, and as an ideological adversary in the inner political arena. Embarking upon renewal of diplomatic relations both sides had to deal with a tangle of accumulated phobias which hampered normal bilateral communication. Keeping up specified relations with Israel's opponents, particularly, Russian-Iranian cooperation in the nuclear field, along with outbursts of xenophobia in Russia, in due course, has given rise to a strong anti-Russian feeling in Israel and lack of interest to Russia on the part of Israeli political, business and scientific circles.

Today's tendency to cooperation is kept up by a positive rather well-balanced approach of the Russian leadership to the questions of Israel's national security and a positive role the Russian-speaking repatriates play in the development of trade and economic and cultural ties with Russia. There is a gradually growing mutual interest promoting advance to contact, mutual understanding and a more dynamic growth of cooperation.

### **Conclusion**

At the end of our short survey of a not too simple epoch of relations between the two countries there arises an inevitable question: what comes next?

At the present stage, the Russian-Israeli relations are developing favorably and, despite serious disagreements in the assessment of Russia's Middle East policy, are characterized by a growing mutual confidence.

Most of the questions which at one time affected the relationships are off the agenda today. Thus, the existence of the Jewish Diaspora is no longer viewed as a negative issue, just vice versa – it has turned into a factor promoting development of relations.

After rather a long period of stagnation, there are also positive tendencies to be found in the economic field.

In the sphere of culture, there is an intensive exchange and mutual cooperation, which has a positive impact on the general context of relations.

There is evidence of a growing dialog, of a further development of partnership and all-round cooperation. However, in the long view, a lot of effort will still be required to widen the economic, political and strategic features of this cooperation.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the century-long joint history of our two peoples, with its ups and downs, likes and dislikes, has created a favorable foundation for dialog and a gigantic potential for developing a mutually beneficial cooperation.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> The main package of treaties with Russia was signed in 1994; it was also then that a bilateral committee on trade and economic cooperation was formed.

# COMMUNITY LIFE

## TATS IN THE CAUCASUS: THE TWISTED FATE OF AN ETHNICON

*Michael Chlenov*  
(Moscow)

The word *Tat* belongs to the Turkic lexical fund. Though nobody knows its exact semantics, the word had probably been used in different parts of the Turkic world as far back as in the early Middle Ages to specify commoner farmers that were subjugated by the Turkomans. The prominent Russian turcologist N. A. Baskakov gives the following meanings of the word *Tat* that had been in use yet in the proto-Turkic language: person of another tribe; vagrant people; volunteer soldiers. In the 19th century, a German orientalist defined the meaning of this word as “the expression of the attitude of the haughty ill-mannered nobility to the industrious albeit helpless and deeply lapsed people who had withdrawn to inapproachable rocky strongholds where they could maintain, in some measure, their independence”. In other words, the term *Tats* was used in reference to various, mostly non-Turkic, marginal and subordinate social groups.

However, with the advent of the nomad Turkoman large-scale migration and wars of the conquest age, the word *Tat* began to acquire ethnicon implications. Some scholars perceive the *Tat* morpheme in such widely used ethnicons as *Tartar* and *Tadjik*. In the Turkic epos *Idegey*, the *Tat* ethnicon is sometimes used as a synonym of the *Tartar* ethnicon. As is known, the primordial bearers of the *Tartar* ethnicon were not Turkomans but rather Moguls, if not the Manchus. They were all exterminated by order of Genghis Khan and, ironically, their ethnicon was transferred over to the Moguls themselves, especially those who went over to the Turkic language in the western part of the Great Steppe. The Iranian-speaking population that had been driven out to the mountainous Pamir and Tien Shan geographical regions and that had been, over a long period of time, under the political domination of the khanates founded by the Turkic-speaking potentates, came to be called

Tadjiks. The Tartars of the northern Crimea foothills used the name *Tats* in reference to the population of the Crimea South Coast, be they Greek or Turkic-speaking Christians, including the assimilated, by the Turkomans, Crimean Goths or Turkic-speaking Moslems. The Nogai, on their part, who inhabited the steppes of the peninsula, used the word *Tats* both for the population of the South Coast and the Crimea Tartars in general. Finally, the term (*Tot*) is known in the Magyar language that experienced a considerable influence of the Turkic languages in the remote age when proto-Hungarians lived as nomads in the Eastern European steppes. The Hungarians use the term *Tots* when referring to the Slovaks, that is to say, the conquered population who were, in this case, agricultural Slavs.

The term *Tat* had a generally perceived pejorative connotation. It was not good to be called a Tat and, as may be supposed, those who were called so tried not to use the word and to avoid it. Even the well-known Soviet Mountain-Jewish public and party figure J. Agarunov, who, as far as could be determined, facilitated the implementation of the ethnicon among the Soviet political nomenclature, noted in his memoirs that “the word *Tat* in the Jagatai dialect of the Turkic language means *subject* or *servant*” (Agarunov 1995:12). The word expressed the abusive attitude of the victor nomad towards the vanquished agrarian. Possibly, the Central Asian Turkomans implied by the term *Tat* the meaning of *muttering* or *speaking a foreign language*, in other words, *a mute person* (nemets), the way the Slavs called the Germans.

We shall note that the majority of agrarians conquered by the Turkic tribes (Huns, Seljuks, Tartar Moguls, Kajars, etc.) spoke Iranian languages. It applies to the population of Iran proper, as well as of Central Asian oases, the western Turkestan, Afghanistan, western and northern Pakistan and, partly, of Transcaucasia. The result of this was that in the said geographical region, in the Turkomans’ language perception the *Tat* notion became predominantly, if not exclusively, the denomination of vanquished agrarians speaking one or another Iranian language. The medieval philologist Makhmud Kashgari (11 c) believed that the Turkomans named everybody who spoke Iranian language *Tats*. It is clear that this idiosyncratic quasi ethnicon existed also in the territory of the Great Iran, which today includes Iran proper, Afghanistan, part of Pakistan, Chinese Turkestan, Central Asian states and the Eastern Caucasus. As is known, Iran had been repeatedly subjected to raids and conquests by different nomadic communities many of which spoke Turkic languages. It is believed that it was they who first used the word *Tat* to designate various Iranian tribes. In the ethnographic literature there are some, though quite few, accounts of the existence, most likely in Iranian Azerbaijan, of some kind

of Tat language which is distinct from the Eastern Caucasus Tats' language. Though I don't possess any more detailed information on this ethnic or ethnolinguistic group, I believe that it would be helpful to have some for the study of the origin of the ethnicon *Tat*, as well as for the purpose of describing groups that are specified by this ethnicon. Within the framework of socio-political and cultural-research discourse, the word *Tat* is applied to a variety of Eastern and Northern Caucasus ethnic groups who use in their everyday life different dialects of a particular Iranian language that was named the *Tat language*.

It is unlikely that we will be able to find out, basing on some historical sources, when the Turkic speaking population of the Eastern Caucasus (the Azerbaijani and, supposedly, the Kumyk) first began calling their Iranian speaking neighbors *Tats*: there are simply no such sources, or if there are any, they were not generalized by scholars in Turkic and Persian philology. What is more, some contemporary scholars believe that even if the ethnicon *Tat* was used in the Azerbaijanian language before the 20th century, it was only used in relation to Muslim *Tats* and by no way to *Tat*-speaking Jews or Armenians. These scholars tend to believe that the word *Tat* in relation to Mountain Jews and to the so-called Armenian *Tats* was first used in literature and only later did it come into everyday use owing to the activities of Russian philologists at the end of the 19th century who were the first to study the *Tat* language. In reality, the events were most likely different: Russian philologists borrowed an everyday Azerbaijanian ethnicon or name of a social group and it gradually acquired an exclusively ethnicon-related meaning eventually becoming an object of a bitter ideological dispute. Long before V. Miller, who published the first scientific study on the *Tat* language, this ethnicon was used by the pioneer in contemporary Azerbaijani historiography Abbas-Kuli-aga Bakikhanov in his historical work *Gulistan-Iram* written in Russian in 1844. Referring to the population of contemporary Northern Azerbaijan and Southern Dagestan, the scholar wrote: "Tats, that is Armenians and Jews who lived in these places, with the course of time had merged, for the most part, with Muslims; while in Tabasaran, Derbent, Baku, Kuba and Kura there are very few of them, in Shirvan and Sheki there are more of them than anywhere else... The whole of Shirvan, except for *Tats*, Armenians and Jews profess the Sunni or Shiah Mohammedan faith" (Bakikhanov 1991: 21, 26). The Azerbaijani historian is quite unambiguous when he applies the name of *Tats* to non-Muslims only and doesn't do so in respect of *Tat*-speaking Muslims: "The inhabitants of eight villages in Tabasaran, namely, Jalkhan, Rukhal, Khamah, Magatyr, Zidnan, Gumeidi, Mutagi and Bilhadi which are situated near the ruins of a town

that was founded by Anushirvan in connection with the construction of the Derbent Wall, speak the Tat language – one of the dialects of the Old Persian language... The entire population of the magals (boroughs) situated between the towns of Shemakha and Kudial, namely, Geuz, Lagitch and Koshunlu of the Shirvan Uyezd (district), Barmak, Sheshpar and the lower part of Budukh of the Kuba Uyezd and the entire Baku Uyezd (with the exception of six Terekeme or Turkmen villages) speak the same language which is indicative of their Persian origin” (Bakikhanov 1991: 24).

One way or another, from the end of the 19th century on, in Russian literature the ethnicon *Tat* settles as applied to three different albeit kindred, in terms of the language, ethnic groups: Mountain Jews, Iranian-speaking northern and central Azerbaijan and southern Dagestan Muslims, and a small group of Tat-speaking Armenian-Gregorian Christians living in the villages of Kilvar and Matrasi in the central part of Azerbaijan. As far as could be determined basing on scarce hundred-years-old published sources, none of these ethnic groups use the word *Tat* for self-designation; neither do they so now. Muslim Tats (this is how their ethnicon is officially called in today’s Russia where it was used during the 2002 census) in their great majority identify themselves as the Azerbaijani. Underway is the speedy integration of Iranian-speaking Muslim population into the Azerbaijani nation. Ironically, the Mountain Jews ‘tatization’ campaign that took place after World War II strengthened the Azerbaijani identity of the Dagestan Muslim Tats, not to mention those who lived in Azerbaijan. An attempt to frame an “indivisible Tat nation”, undertaken on the initiative of the Soviet power and the Soviet Mountain-Jewish elite, never caught on with the Muslim Tats. The aforementioned J. Agarunov touches upon the subject in his memoirs: “All [Muslim Tat] poets of past ages wrote their works in Farsi which is similar to the Tat language; but later, when Turkic literature began to develop and spread, Muslim Tats chose not to stand out, and now they are bent for the Turkic, i.e., the Azerbaijani language and culture. True, even today among their families and friends, they lovingly speak their Tat mother tongue; however, it is just as impossible to tear them away from Azerbaijani culture and literature as the Armenian Tats from Armenian literature and culture” (Agarunov 1995: 131). And then Araganov cites a response of a Muslim Tat to an idea of developing a common Tat literature “for all the Tats”: “The renowned Azerbaijani playwright Jafar Jabbarly, a Muslim Tat, wrote all his inspired works in Azerbaijani; but he didn’t deny that he very much loved writing, only for his close family, small fairy tales and short poems in the Tat language. ‘Nevertheless’, he would say in Tat

with his gracious smile, ‘we shouldn’t start this business, since it has no future’” (Agarunov 1955: 131–132). As of the Muslim Tats who maintain their distinct identity in contrast to that of the Azerbaijani, they, as may be supposed, are inclined to name themselves Caucasian Persians, at least in Russian. In the early 90s of previous century, the Christian Tats shared the sad fate of the Azerbaijan Armenians and, according to some reports, now live in the North Caucasus, the place where small groups of them used to live before. Another part of the Christian Tat population found refuge in Armenia where they speedily integrate into the Armenian nation. Before that, when they still lived in Azerbaijan, according to quite scarce sources, they called themselves not Tats but either Armenians or named themselves after the villages they lived in. Therefore, the term *Tat* that had been used some time ago in reference to these two groups which today, with good reason, can be considered ethnographic groups of the Azerbaijani and Armenians, accordingly, can hardly be applied to them at present; and when it is applied, it is only done so by outsiders and not as a self-designation.

Thus, this term acquired particular relevance only among Mountain Jews. As far back as in the late nineteenth century, it began to take on an ideological meaning which gained momentum over the subsequent period. After Bakikhanov, this ethnonym was first mentioned in reference to Mountain Jews by the first Mountain Jewish enlightener Ilya Anisimov in his famous study “Caucasian Mountain Jews”. The author of the book who was the first to present to the Russian, as well as to any other audience, a portrait of the exotic Caucasian Jewish brethren, was quite skeptical about his Ashkenazi brothers-in-faith, sharing, probably, the wide-spread among Mountain Jews opinion at the time. More than once does he accentuate the unfriendliness of Caucasian Jews towards European Jews; he cites shocking sayings, e.g.: “It’s no good to kill a European Jew by cutting his throat; it’s better to cut the nape of the neck in order to torture him” (Anisimov 2002: 16). For Anisimov, it was important to underscore the difference between the mountaineer Jews and the Ashkenazi, and the word *Tat* attached to Mountain Jews a kind of additional specific identity not shared with the Ashkenazi but shared with other mountaineers. In his work he presents a fantastic description of the Jews in Persia merging with some “Iranian Tat tribe in the course of which some of the Jews accepted the prevalent pagan religion of the latter while others disseminated the faith of Moses among the Iranians, and as a result, firstly, today’s language of the Jews belongs to the Iranian language group... secondly, in the religion of Mountain Jews there are still some heathen beliefs” (Anisimov 2002: 25).

For the writers of that time, the word “Jew” would bring up, quite logically, the association with the great number of well-known by the Russians Ashkenazi Jews. Any dissimilarity of a Jewish group from that type immediately raised, and still raises, the question whether it is a “genuine Jewish” group or whether they are descendants of proselytes. From the standpoint of today’s scientific axioms accepted by the Judaica studies, the very statement of the problem is incorrect. When you compare Mountain Jews with the Persian, Bukhara or even the Kurdistan Jews, you won’t see that striking difference that is evident when they are compared with the Ashkenazi Jews. In this case, there is no need for inventing a never-existed in ancient Persia “Iranian Tat tribe”. “Heathen beliefs” in the form of various folk customs and superstitions that are found among all sub-ethnic Jewish groups, including the Ashkenazi, say, virtually, nothing about their origin. But the whole point is that the ideological charge that was placed on the first-ever usage of the term in the process of ‘tatization’ was aimed at showing how little in common Mountain Jews have, particularly, with the Russian Ashkenazi who, as is well known, were subjected to discrimination in Tsarist Russia.

From that point on, ‘tatization’ proceeds at an ever-increasing rate. Mountain Jews entered the Soviet period with a, so to say, double ethnicon. Their self-designation was, and still is, the word *Juhur*, which is the Tat equivalent of the Persian *Juhud*, the Jew, with a distinctive of the Tat language rhotacism (changing the end Iranian ‘d’ for ‘r’). But officially, they were almost from the very beginning of the Soviet period called Tats, that is Mountain Jews or Mountain Tat Jews, Tat Jews or just Tats. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, their language, thanks to the initiative of the philologist V. M. Miller, was always referred to as *Tat*. Sometimes, the term is attended by some additional explanatory words: “the Tat Jewish dialect”, “the Tat dialect of Mountain Jews”, etc. It is only in the very recent years that a tendency has emerged among Mountain Jewish philologists to change the name the *Tat language* for the *language of Mountain Jews*. “Mountain Jews themselves call their language Zuhun Juhuri... or just Juhuri,” writes the lexicographer and grammarian M. Agarunov (Agarunov M 2005: 5).

In the 1920s, there appeared a new concept of “dejudaization” of Mountain Jews using the notion of *Tat*. In 1927 in Moscow, the All-Union Conference on the Cultural Development of the Tats (Mountain Jews) took place. In 1929, it was decided to switch the Tat language from the Hebrew script to that of Latin. Though all these initiatives were carried out under the lee of the ethnicon *Tat* and the language name *Tat*, they were actually aimed only at Mountain Jews. While everybody knew that, once in a while bossy

instructions were heard to the effect that the achievement of the new Soviet Tat culture should be extended to “all Tats”. But these aims were unrealizable: too great was the difference between the fates and interests of these three different peoples. However, the striving to stand apart from the Ashkenazi continued to be pertinent, especially when anti-Semitism in its Christian and Muslim guise reared its head again in the USSR after the Revolution.

In 1932, the linguist N. A. Anisimov (a relative of Ilya Anisimov) formulated fundamental principles of what later became the tatization policy: “1. The Tats that are called Mountain Jews have no affiliation with Jews that were taken captive and brought by Assyrian kings to Iran and Media; 2. The Mosaic faith among the Khazars was disseminated by the Jews who escaped from Rome in the 7th to 8th centuries or even earlier; 3. The Mosaic faith among some of the Tats (who like other Tats were fire worshippers) was disseminated by the Khazars or perhaps the Jews who escaped from Rome to the Caucasus; 4. The Tat Jews, Muslims and the Christians comprise a single people. They were divided by religion, the faiths of Moses, Christ and Mahomet” (Anisimov 1932, cited in Agarunov 1995: 23). Today it seems strange even to comment on these thesis, so helpless and groundless they appear in terms of historical logic. One could accept point 1 should Iran and Media captives be considered the so-called ten lost tribes. In fact, the folklore tradition according to which the Caucasian Jews were descended from the Ten Tribes has no historical grounds whatsoever. Historical science knows nothing of any Jews escaping from Rome to Khazaria, as well as of any kind of proselytism activities of the Khazars among the Eastern Caucasus Tats: it is pure invention. There are no documents corroborating the existence in the past of a single Tat people. It is also highly questionable considering the aforementioned pejorative character of the ethnicon *Tat*. Today, Mountain Jews are again the integral part of the Jewish people just as they had been over many centuries.

We shall also note here, that indubitable is not only the affiliation of this small people to Jews but also the fact that Mountain Jews are Caucasian people, moreover, Eastern Caucasian people inhabiting the Muslim part of the region. And when the leaders of the so-called Tat movement referred to their people as to Caucasians they were quite sincere. The late renowned ethnographer Michael Matatovich Ikhilov (one of the few Mountain Jew intellectuals) who for years tried to prevent the Dagestan state-sponsored ‘tatization’ and ‘dejudaization’ of this small part of the Jewish people expressed the same ideas in 1950s to 1980s. He asserted the unity of the Jewish and the Caucasian bases of the people’s life and noted that being an integral part of

the Jewish people Mountain Jews have all the rights to be considered one of the indigenous peoples of Dagestan.

Indeed, there is an element of truth in it since any Jewish ethnic group always has two firm affiliations: with the Jewish people as a whole, of which they are an integral part, and with the nation or a region where it was formed. The Ashkenazi are not only an integral part of the Jewry, but they are also, undoubtedly, an Eastern European people whose everyday culture is impregnated with traits immediately understood by a Russian, Pole, Ukrainian or a Romanian. The Sephardi, 500 years after expulsion can still call themselves Pyrenean people; they not only preserved their Judeo-Spanish language of Ladino, but they also preserved the enchanting melodies of Spanish songs and garment details, and what's more, they have maintained a nearly magic sense of attachment to their historical motherland that half a millennium ago had devoted them to expulsion and wanderings in strange lands. We recognize Hindus in today's Cochin Jews who had moved to Israel; we see Central Asian features in Bukhara Jews wherever they live. Ethiopian Jews, who are now in Israel, look much more like Ethiopians in their appearance and culture than, say, Mountain Jews. This is what the Jewish civilization is like: after two thousand years in Diaspora it is now slowly but surely gathering in the land of their remote ancestors, the Land of Israel. This civilization, like all other great civilizations, including the Christian, Muslim and Hindu, was essentially polyethnic, comprised of a multitude of different peoples having in common the sense of involvement in the integral whole. The polyethnic character of the civilization gave it the variability by virtue of which it has survived. Whenever, as a result of historical peripeteias or tragedies, encountered by the Jewry only too often, some ethnic constituent of the Jewry would disappear, all the others continued to exist and bear the grandeur and responsibilities of the tradition. Thus, as a result of assimilation of Jews by the world's largest nation there is no more Chinese Jewry. Its disappearance, like the loss of any people, small or large, enriching the palette of mankind's culture is a tragedy. However it proved not to be fatal for the Jewry as a whole which kept on maintaining its image embodied in a variety of ethnic costumes. One of such 'costumes' is designed by Mountain Jews representing if not the greatest, yet a strong separate branch of the Persian Jewry. In the Jewish tradition, Persia or Iran in the broad sense, are designated by the word *Paras u' Maday* in which we can discern two different in the past nations, i.e., Persia and Media, roughly speaking today's Iran and Azerbaijan. Jews had not only lived in that big neighborhood since the old days (from the Scroll of Esther we get a hint

about the early stages of Jewish habitation in Persia), but they had also created, over the course of history, their own internal sub-ethnic divisions. The Persian Jewry includes the so-called *Dzhidi*, several tens of thousands of Jews of the contemporary Iranian state who still live in Tehran, Isfahan and other big cities. The so-called Bukhara or Central Asian Jews, who until recently lived in the Soviet Union and are now emigrating in mass quantities from the Central Asian countries to Israel and the USA, should also be reckoned among the Persian Jewry. Most recently the Afghan Jewry that was also, in a general sense, a part of the Persian Jewry, had vanished before our eyes in the furnace of the Afghan war. Somewhat earlier, a hundred years ago, there were still Jewish groups in Xinjiang which had, apparently, partly assimilated with the local Uigur population and partly joined the Bukhara Jewish community of Samarkand and Tashkent. A variety of folk stories concerning the Jewish element taking part in the creation of a number of Muslim peoples accompany the information on their origin. Among them are the Pashtun, the largest people of contemporary Afghanistan, who bear the banner of Islamic fundamentalism, and small ethnic groups of Eastern Transcaucasia who still live their insulated life in auls.

Present-day scholars typically link the appearance of Jews in the Eastern Caucasus to the migration policy of the Persian Sasanides. A much later forming of the distinctive brethren Mountain Jews should be analyzed against the background of the five-hundred-year-long history of Iranian Jews. Of particular interest in this context could be the fate of the Jewish population of the Southern Caspian Sea region, of the so-called Gilyak Jews, separate groups of whom, as is known, joined the Mountain Jews of Kuba. The other part of them migrated in the opposite direction, eastward, and started a community of Mashhad Jews of Horasan who were forced to embrace Islam in mid 19th century. Another possible component was the Persian Jews speaking the Persian Jewish language of *Zabony-Imrany*, that was still heard in the Jewish settlement of the town of Kuba within the memory of J. Agarunov (Agarunov 1995: 16). We can also mention Aramaic-speaking Kurdistan Jews, the Lakhluks, whose genetic affinity to Mountain Jews was noted by the Soviet expert in dermatoglyphics G. L. Khit. However, all this is only fragments of yet-to-be carried out study of the Mountain Jews ethnic history. Considering the dramatic fate of Mountain Jews over the past twenty years, it is not unlikely that it won't ever be completed. As to all this fuss with the ethnicon *Tat*, dating back to early 20th century, it has very little to do with historical and ethnographic studies. Its only aim was to get rid of the annoying for the Mountain Jews affiliation to the Ashkenazi.

Indeed, the relations between the Ashkenazi and Mountain Jews are akin to relations between two competing brothers in the same family. On the one hand, in this alliance, the Ashkenazi appear to be the elder brother working the way for Mountain Jews out to Europe and, incidentally, to Israel too. On the other hand, they have too little in common in terms of details of the daily routine. The relations between Mountain Jews and the Ashkenazi which have, in fact, undergone many changes over the last fifty years, became complicated due to obvious historical circumstances. As far back as in the 19th century, Mountain Jews had to convince the Tsarist authorities not to apply to them the restrictive anti-Jewish legislation of the Russian Empire. Even back then, the argument was that they were “very distinct from within-the-Pale Jews” and that, after all, they had their own name, the Tats. Before World War II, the Ashkenazi sought to propagate their way of thinking and their new life experience among Mountain Jews. OZET (Russian abbreviation for *Society for Settling Toiling Jews on the Land*) attempts to organize kolkhozy and to resettle the Jews to the Crimea – all of this was instigated by them. Associated with the Ashkenazi was also Jewish Nationalism, Zionism, that was popular among some Mountain Jews in the early decades of the twentieth century and then became severely dangerous in Soviet times. And yet, in the 1920s and 30s ‘tatization’ though somewhat fencing off Mountain Jews from the European ones, still didn’t lead directly to the denial of the Jewish heritage.

And then, the Holocaust tragedy befell us and three Mountain-Jewish kolkhozy were exterminated: the Shaumyan kolkhoz in the Crimea, and the Bogdanovka and Menzhinsky kolkhozy in the Kursk District of the Stavropol Kray. The Jewish neighborhood in Nalchik (the so-called Kolonka – a small colony in Russian) survived owing to the fact that they had managed to prove to the Germans occupying the town that they were not at all Jews (Chlenov 2000: 186–188). After the war, everybody knew, of course, what had happened to the Jews in the North Caucasus and the Crimea. But let me remind you that in the Soviet Union it was not supposed to ever mention the Holocaust. Those who miraculously survived preferred to keep silent for forty odd years until glasnost set free their memories. All the more so, it was prudent to keep silent for the people who had survived by virtue of an extraordinary phenomenon that happened in Nalchik. And the Mountain Jews kept silent, but they did not want to undergo anything like this any more. As we all well know, there were good reasons for such concerns: in the late 1940s the world and, notably, the Soviet Jews witnessed the campaign against “rootless cosmopolites”, the extermination of the Jewish intellectuals

and the “exposure” of the alleged Doctors’ plot. In this tragic situation, some leaders of the small Caucasian Jewish people were tempted to drop their Jewish heritage and get some kind of a respite or maybe a restful life for several generations. Nobody could imagine that there would come a time when the Jews will start their struggle for the right to emigrate from the USSR, that there would come a day when the USSR itself will disintegrate; that North Caucasus would witness the fratricidal war in Chechnya, the ardent Abkhazian conflict and the growth of Islamism in Dagestan; and that all this would force most of the Mountain Jews to leave the places they inhabited for centuries and escape to Israel or Moscow where they would seek justice not at the Communist Party district committees or mosques but at synagogues... But all that was yet to happen.

But in those days, in the 1950s and 60s, there began the preaching of the theme formulated as early as it the 1930th: we are by no means Jews, we are Tats, that is, part of the indivisible Iranian Aryan people and nobody should confuse us with Jews; and there was also a new tune added: they should let us change the ethnicity line in our passports. This preaching first started in Dagestan where the flower of the ethnic intelligentsia lived, and their voice was sure to be heard in the post-war Soviet reality. The ‘tatization’ fell on the dunged ground of the state-sponsored anti-Semitism. It was a convenient excuse for the Dagestan authorities who reckoned the Tats, and not Mountain Jews, among the aboriginal population of their republic. Finally, it was good for those who were afraid of the advent of modernization and of the exposure of the Mountain-Jew adat which underlay the customs of the small ethnic group, to destructive influences. Their own writers, engineers and party functionaries took the initiative in finger-pointing:

“Look at that young Moscow lady in a miniskirt! Do you want your daughters to get that way?”

Everybody answered “Certainly, not!”

“If you don’t want it, you should remember: we must be Tats, and cease being Jews.”

And they would cease. And in evidence that it was really so they would provide themselves with a “certificate” from Moscow, from the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, to the effect that the so-called Mountain Jews are actually only a part of the indivisible Tat people and have nothing to do with Jews. It was, certainly a shameful episode for the Soviet ethnography, and it is no use denying that it did take place. What wouldn’t you do to please the regime of the state-sponsored anti-Semitism? And many, very many of them, would go to the Militia to change their

passports; incidentally some of them would also visit the OVIR (Office of Visas and Registration) to submit, just to be on the safe side, a request for a reunion with their relatives in Israel.

Several decades have passed from those times. Everything has changed. Desolated are the long-inhabited Mountain Jews hearths and homes. The Jewish section of Makhachkala is almost deserted; much less is the number of Jews in Derbent; only about 15 thousand people are there now in the once crowded Kolonka in Nalchik; almost deserted is the town of Vartashen Oguz; the only ones who still hold their ground, though it is hard to say how long they will hold out, are the Jews of Kuba. New Mountain Jew communities appeared in Moscow and Pyatigorsk and, of course, in Israel where most of the Mountain Jews live now and where their children, who are born and brought up in the Jewish state, chatter fluently not in Tat or Russian but in Hebrew. In Israel, they don't talk any more about Tat Heroes of the Soviet Union but rather honor as a hero the Israeli general of Mountain Jewish descent Yekutiel Adam, who was killed in action in the 1982 Lebanon war.

Among the emigrants, the term *Tat* in reference to Mountain Jews is unknown. In Israel, a new ethnicon *Kavkazim* meaning the Caucasians has appeared. This word refers only to Mountain Jews and is not applied in reference to Georgian Jews. Similarly, in the West, particularly in the USA, Mountain Jews also tend to name themselves Caucasian Jews instead of Mountain Jews which seems to them not prestigious, something like "Jews from the Mountains". In Russia, the term *Mountain Jew* has gained its ground. Moreover, Mountain Jews are recognized as one of the small indigenous ethnic groups of the Russian Federation. As to the word *Tat* the present article is dedicated to, it continues to be used in the post-Soviet space, particularly, in Dagestan. Under the Constitution of this Russian republic, Tats are considered to be one of its indigenous peoples. The Tat-language magazine "Vatan" ("Motherland") which succeeded the "Vatan Sovetimu" ("Soviet Motherland") magazine is published in Makhachkala. Until recently, before the Council of State had been dissolved, Tats had a permanent representation to it. However, there are quite a number of Jews in Dagestan who once chose to be registered as Tats and are still maintaining this ethnicity. After the 'ethnicity' box in Russian passports was removed in the late 1990s, the problem became less pertinent and now it has actually no ideological charge. Yet, it is reasonable to suggest that most of the Jews who still prefer to be considered Tats take a more conservative, pro-Soviet, political stand. The 2002 Russian census gives the number of both Mountain Jews and Tats. Under the guise of both names there are mostly Juhurs. Considering the unlikely small number of either

group, it is fair to assume that during the census most of them identified themselves just as Jews.

Today, Juhurs are scattered in different parts of the world. Everywhere, except Dagestan and, partly, Azerbaijan, they have joined Jewish communities. Still in the Soviet times, some Mountain Jews actively participated in the re-creation of the Jewish community of the USSR. Many of them partook in the activities of the major Jewish organizations: Vaad of the USSR, Vaad of Russia, Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations of Russia, Russian Jewish Congress, Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, etc. In Israel, there is the Association of Caucasian Jews and in the USA they have their public organizations. But on the whole, the formerly compact Mountain Jewry is now facing very different challenges. Underway is an active assimilation and integration in the new unknown communities. The language of Mountain Jews is losing ground and the younger generation is switching over to Hebrew, English and Russian. The ties between Mountain Jews living in different countries are weakening. In an effort to maintain these ties and to preserve the values that in the Soviet times many hoped to save by giving up their Jewish identity, in 2003, there was founded the World Congress of Mountain Jews that became a member of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress.

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## THE KRYMCHAKS: CURRENT STATE OF THE COMMUNITY<sup>1</sup>

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(Simferopol' – Oxford)

### **Introduction**

*The article by Mikhail Kizilov is dedicated to the vanishing community of the Crimean Jews, a.k.a. the Krymchaks. Today the Krymchaks are scattered around many countries of the world. As a consequence of assimilation and dejudaization processes they have almost entirely lost the peculiar ethnic and cultural features which made them attractive to many researchers in the course of the last few decades. The author of the article, a professional historian who received his doctoral degree at Oxford, provides an objective and unbiased analysis of the current state of the Krymchak community. The main problem of studying the history, ethnography and language of the Krymchaks lies in the fact that today this topic is analysed by members of the Krymchak community who did not receive a systematic historical education. As a consequence, they come to the “wrong conclusions regarding the ethnic history” of their own community. Mikhail Kizilov offers us a comprehensive survey of the topic and uses varied (for such a comparatively short article) bibliographic material, including unpublished sources.*

*In my opinion, the scholar is right when he supposes that the community was formed in the late Middle Ages / early modern times on the basis of common Tatar cultural and linguistic background. He somewhat ignores the fact that this process continued also in the course of the 19th century through the active absorption of the Jewish emigrants coming to the Crimea from the western provinces of Russian empire which were included into the Pale of Settlements. This is why the community became many times larger: from around 800 souls in*

*1783 to almost 7000 souls in 1913 (estimation). The author is absolutely right when he emphasizes the artificial nature and the late character (first half of the 19th century) of the ethnonym “Krymchak” in the context of the general history of the Crimean Rabbanites. Especially interesting is his analysis of different concepts of the ethnic origin of the Krymchaks which were formed in the post-war period and were developed in the 1970s / early 21st century. These concepts are inseparably connected with the historical and political processes of the Soviet and post-Soviet era. It was during this period that, on the one hand, numerous most interesting historical-linguistic studies appeared, and on the other hand, various theories-“mythologemes” emerged. Disintegration of the Soviet Union, dispersion and emigration of the Krymchaks to Israel, USA and Germany, passing away of representatives of older generation who kept traditions and language – all this does not provide any optimism regarding the future of the community which dwindles before our very eyes...*

*I would like to use the opportunity to thank Mikhail Kizilov for his objective study, analysis of the problem, and optimism regarding “the ethno-cultural renaissance of this most interesting community.”*

**Mikhail Gurdzhi, Arad, Israel  
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### A survey of the history of the community

Modern ethnography defines the Krymchaks as an ethnic entity formed as amalgam of several Jewish groups which settled in the Crimea in the first centuries A.D., in the Middle Ages, and in early modern time. “The Krymchaks” is a very late and in many respects artificial term which appeared in the first half of the 19th century, soon after the annexation of the Crimea by the Russian Empire (1783). This term was invented to designate the local Turkic-speaking Rabbanite Jews who were distinctly different from the rest of the Jewish population which began settling in the Crimea after 1783. One of the Krymchaki leaders, Isaac Kaya (1887–1956)<sup>2</sup>, explained the meaning of this term as follows: “The Krymchaks represent a special group of Jews who live in the Crimean peninsula since ancient times and in many respects adopted Tatar culture”<sup>3</sup>.

The Krymchak community was formed in the Crimea from the late Middle Ages through early modern times by emigrants of various Jewish communities of Europe, Asia Minor, the Caucasus and the Near East. Among these emigrants there were not only the Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazic Jews, but also Graeco-, Ladino-, Tat-, and Arab-speaking Jews from Byzantium (Ottoman Empire), Spain, Italy, the Caucasus, Russia, and some Oriental countries. Surnames of modern Krymchaks are eloquent witnesses to the varied geographic origin of Krymchak settlers. Thus, for example, the surnames Berman, Gutman and Ashkenazi (and its Krymchaki form “Achkinazi”) belonged to Yiddish-speaking emigrants from Europe and Russia; Abraben, Piastro, Lombrozo and Trevgoda – to Sephardic Jews from Italy and Spain; Bakshi, Stamboli, Izmirli, Tokatly, and Mizrahi – to Jews coming from the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim East. The surnames “Lekhno” and “Varshavskii” belonged to emigrants from Poland, “Gota” and “Weinberg” – from Germany, “Gurdzhi” – from the Caucasus, etc. Many surnames attested the Crimean origin or professions of their owners: “Mangupli” means “from Mangup” (a medieval stronghold in the Crimea), “Demerdzhi” – “smith,” while “Taukchi” – “poultry farmer.” About 40 percent of the Krymchaki surnames are derivatives from Hebrew (e.g., Peisah, Purim, Rabenu, Levi, Bentovim, Ra-failov, etc.).<sup>4</sup>

The Krymchak community became a unified community formed out of members of different Jewish *'edot* perhaps only in the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries. Furthermore, ethnic processes of acculturation/ amalgamation within the community continued also in the nineteenth century. Starting from medieval times the Crimean Rabbanites, as well as their neighbours, non-Talmudic Crimean Karaites, were under the strong Tatar influence which, however, was limited only to the sphere of culture, language, and every day life and customs. Especially important was a linguistic aspect: the Crimean Rabbanites (Krymchaks) adopted the Krymchak dialect (or, rather, ethnolect) of the Crimean Tatar language as the language of their every day use. Starting from the nineteenth century some Krymchak authors (apparently following leaders of the Karaite community) sometimes called the Krymchak ethnolect “Cagatay/Dzhagatay language.” This tendency became stronger after the war since in the period of Stalin’s deportations it was dangerous to acknowledge the fact that the Krymchaks spoke the Tatar language. This is why after the war and after the disintegration of the Soviet Union many Krymchak leaders claimed that the Krymchaks spoke “Krymchak” or “Cagatay” language<sup>5</sup>. These claims, however, merely demonstrate changes in the ethnic identity of the Krymchaks and have nothing to do with linguistics. Similar ideological (and not scholarly) reasons forced many Crimean Karaites and Turkologists to claim that the Crimean Karaites spoke some sort of a separate “Karaim language,” whereas in fact they certainly spoke an ethnolect of Crimean Tatar<sup>6</sup>. In fact, Dzhagatay (Cagatay), the official language of the Golden Horde is considerably different from the Krymchak and Karaim ethnolects of Crimean Tatar<sup>7</sup>. Majority of modern linguists came to the conclusion that in spite of a number of phonological and lexical differences, the Krymchak ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language cannot be considered a separate Turkic language<sup>8</sup>. This fact was certainly realized by Krymchak authors as well: Nisim Levi Chakhchir, for example, called this language “the Tatar language which we use among ourselves”<sup>9</sup>. The Krymchaks who took part in the census of 1913 also called their native language “Tatar” or “Crimean-Tatar”<sup>10</sup>. Isaac Kaya, the author of numerous primers and manuals of the Crimean Tatar language and Krymchak ethnolect, also called the Krymchak’s spoken language “Tatar”<sup>11</sup>.

This is why in my article I shall call the Krymchak’s Turkic language “the Krymchak ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language” (or, in abridged form, “the Krymchak ethnolect”). From the eighteenth through the twentieth century this ethnolect was used to compose secular and religious works,

fairy-tales, songs, and verses; furthermore, the Krymchaks also translated a number of sacred texts from Hebrew into the Krymchak ethnolect. In spite of the active use of the Krymchak ethnolect for literary purposes, Hebrew remained the main language of liturgy, prayers, correspondence, tombstone inscriptions, and scholarly treatises perhaps until the beginning of the twentieth century. Some Krymchaks continued to use the Krymchak ethnolect and Hebrew characters even after the Second World War<sup>12</sup>.

In 1913 the Krymchak community carried out a community census. According to the census there were about five (or seven) thousand Krymchaks in the Russian Empire. Before the beginning of the Second World War there were about eight thousand Krymchaks. Majority of them lived in Simferopol, Karasubazar, Kerch, Theodosia, and Sevastopol<sup>13</sup>. In the Soviet period the Krymchaks began more actively using Russian, but still remembered their ethnolect. In interwar years the Krymchaks largely switched from the Hebrew font to Latin characters (a similar reform took place among the Crimean Tatars). At the same time the Soviet atheist regime closed the Krymchak synagogue (called by the Krymchaks also *qahal* or *qa'al*)<sup>14</sup>. In the interwar period most Krymchaks lived in Simferopol. At the end of the 1920s – early 1930s emigrants from Karasubazar founded two Krymchak kolkhozes – “Krymchak” and “Yeni Krymchak”<sup>15</sup>. The development of the Krymchak community in the Crimea was disrupted by the German occupation. About 70-80 percent of the Krymchaks were massacred by the Nazis while the “solution” of the “Jewish question” in the occupied Crimea. It seems that none other ethnic group which lived in the Soviet Union suffered as much as the Krymchaks<sup>16</sup>.

*Friends, we erred,  
We remained in the Crimea.  
We were sacrificed  
In the fields of the Crimea...  
Oh my people, is there any remedy  
Against our misfortune?  
It means that this is their destiny!  
Do not forget our misfortunate people  
Died from the hands of the soldiers...*

This is how these events are described in a folk song composed in the Krymchak ethnolect by an anonymous Krymchak author who apparently managed to survive the Holocaust in contrast to his brethren massacred by

the Nazis<sup>17</sup>. The Krymchak community never managed to recover from the tragedy. After the war there were 700–750 Krymchaks living in the Crimea; 2,000 lived in the whole of the Soviet Union in 1959, and only 1448 in 1989<sup>18</sup>. Thus, by the end of the 20th century the community turned out to be on the brink of extinction.

This article is dedicated to the analysis of the current state of the Krymchak community of the former USSR and other countries of the world. I pay special attention to the complicated problem of the ethnic identity of the Krymchaks, to the analysis of literature recently composed by Krymchak authors<sup>19</sup>, and to the future of this vanishing ethnic minority. This article was composed on the basis of written and ethnographic sources, and also on the series of interviews with members of the Krymchak communities of the Crimea, Russia, Israel, and America.

### **Current state of the Krymchak communities of the world in different countries**

According to our estimates there are about 1,200–1,500 Krymchaks in the world today (largely in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea (Ukraine), Russia, Israel, and USA). The Crimean Krymchak community is perhaps the most interesting Krymchak *'edah*. Unfortunately, at the moment the Krymchak community in the **Crimea** is very small: according to the census of 2002 there were only 204 Krymchaks living here<sup>20</sup>. Since 1989, the life of the community is largely administered by the society “Krymchakhlar”. According to Igor Achkinazi, in 1992 the local Krymchaks tried to restore religious traditions of the Krymchaks and create a religious organization called “*Qahal ha-qodesh* according to the Caffa rite” – but they were not a success in this undertaking, apparently, having received little response from the members of the community<sup>21</sup>. From 1997 to 2002 the society “Krymchakhlar” was headed by V.M. Lombrozo (1943–2002)<sup>22</sup>. Since 2002 it is headed by Yuri Purim<sup>23</sup>. The society “Krymchakhlar” has its branches practically in all large Crimean towns. The society also organized a small ethnographic museum<sup>24</sup>. In spite of the fact that the museum houses some interesting objects, there is only one Krymchak manuscript (a collection of religious poetry) which is kept there at the moment. Unfortunately, most important objects which could be displayed there were lost during the Holocaust and after the war.

According to our estimates, there are only 2–3 Krymchak manuscripts which are kept in the Crimea today. Unfortunately, the rest of the

manuscript collections of the Krymchak folk poetry (the so-called *conka/dzhonka* (pl. *conkalar*)) seem to be lost<sup>25</sup>. The society “Krymchakhlar” publishes the almanac entitled “Krymchakhlar. Cultural Heritage of the Krymchaks”. The almanac includes materials related to the history, ethnography, and culture of the Krymchaks. Furthermore, the almanac also reprints Krymchak-related publications issued elsewhere; a part of the almanac is dedicated to the poetry and prose about the Krymchaks. In our opinion, the almanac is much more impressive than similar periodicals published by other ethnic minorities of the Crimea. Its editorial board and authors, not being historians or scholars, decided to collect all available memoirs relevant to Krymchak history from the 19th through the 20th century. Representatives of other Crimean ethnic societies often try to write the history of their peoples by themselves – which often makes their work highly unprofessional and biased. Among members of the community one should especially distinguish such interesting figures as the historian Igor Achkinazi (1954–2006)<sup>26</sup>, philologist and artist David Rebi<sup>27</sup>, journalist and writer Mark Purim (Agatov). December, 11 is officially recognized by the Crimean Parliament the “Day of memory of the Krymchaks and Jews of the Crimea – victims of Nazism”. On that date the flag of the Autonomous Republic Crimea is officially flown at half-mast as a symbol of respect with regard to the Krymchaks and Ashkenazic Jews who perished during the Nazi executions from November 1941 until July 1942<sup>28</sup>.

There are quite a few Krymchak historical monuments in the territory of the Crimean peninsula today: three buildings of Krymchak synagogues (now called by the Krymchaks only *qa'al*)<sup>29</sup>, remnants of Krymchak cemeteries, Krymchak streets and alleys almost in every large Crimean town. Highly symbolical is also the site of the mass execution of the Krymchaks and Ashkenazic Jews at the 9<sup>th</sup> kilometre of the Theodosia road in the vicinity of Simferopol'<sup>30</sup>. In the Crimea the Krymchaks lived predominantly in Simferopol', Sevastopol', Eupatoria, Theodosia, and Kerch. Only one Krymchak, Yakov Mangupli, lives now in the traditional Krymchak centre, the town of Karasubazar (Belogorsk)<sup>31</sup>.

Many Krymchaks are patriots of the Crimea and Russia, many of them protest against the official subdivision of the Crimean peoples into “korennye” (lit. “rooted,” in the sense of “aboriginal, autochthonous”) and “prishlye” (i.e. “newcomers”)<sup>32</sup>. Unfortunately, at the moment, as a result of the atheist policy of the Soviet Union, the Krymchak community almost entirely lost its traditional culture. Not more than 5–7 Krymchaks in the Crimea and other countries and regions are capable to speak the Krymchak

ethnolect<sup>33</sup>. Furthermore, they have almost entirely lost their religious and ethnic traditions. The so-called *tqun*<sup>34</sup>, the rite dedicated to the memory of the Krymchaks who died from 1941 to 1942, remained perhaps the only ethnic and religious holiday which is still being observed by the Krymchaks. This rite was first performed in Simferopol' in 1945. On that day the Krymchaks from all of the Crimea get together (currently in the building of the "Krymchakhlar" society in Krylova Street), perform memorial service-*qadish*, sing ritual songs *pyzmon* (from Heb. *pizmon*), and also songs in the Krymchak ethnolect devoted to the tragic destiny of the massacred Krymchaks. Traditional Krymchak food is served during the performance. *Tqun* takes places twice a year, in the evening, first in July–August and for the second time – on December, 11 and 12. In the morning, irrespective of the weather, those who take part in the ceremony arrive to the 9<sup>th</sup> kilometre of the Theodosia road, to the memorial on the site of the execution of the Krymchaks and Ashkenazic Jews<sup>35</sup>.

The Krymchak community of **Russia** is comparatively large. More than a hundred Krymchaks live in Novorossiisk. First Krymchaks settled in this city apparently at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A large number of the Krymchaks moved to Novorossiisk in 1941, when some Krymchaks managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Kerch. According to oral communications, today the local Krymchaks do not maintain any organized community life.

Dispersed Krymchak families live in other Russian cities. There is a small community living in St. Petersburg. T.I. Trevgoda was its head until 2007<sup>36</sup>. A composer A. Bakshi and a singer L.S. Bakshi live in the capital of Russia, in Moscow. They have recently published a CD collection of traditional Krymchak songs<sup>37</sup>. Alexander Tkachenko, football player, defender of human rights, litterateur, director of the Russian PEN-Centre, also lived in Moscow until his untimely death in December 2007. A few days before his death he published a book "The Dream of a Krymchak, or Alienated Land" which represents a collection of short stories about the life and history of the Crimean Krymchaks.<sup>38</sup> V.I. Baginskaia, a poet and translator of poetry from the Krymchak ethnolect into Russian, lives in Krasnodar<sup>39</sup>.

Some Krymchaks live in **Abkhazia**. A small community was established in the town of Sukhumi in the second half of the nineteenth century. There were 152 Krymchaks living in Sukhumi in 1926. The community maintained close contacts with local (especially Georgian) Jews. Nevertheless, in the 1980s the local Krymchaks stopped celebrating *tqun*, visiting synagogues, performing circumcision, etc.<sup>40</sup>

There are about 200 Krymchaks in **Ukraine** (outside the Crimea).<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, because of the fact that they do not maintain any communal activity we do not have any data about their life.

The largest Krymchak community lives in **Israel**. According to some data, there are about 600–700 Krymchaks. Most of them are recent emigrants from the Crimea, St. Petersburg and Novorossiisk; among them one can meet such surnames as Gurdzhi, Dondo, Khondo, Chulak, Pesach, etc. The Krymchak community in *Erets Yisrael* was established at the end of the 19th century as a result of the activity of Hayyim Hizkiyahu Medini (1832–1904), the Krymchak enlightener and rabbi in Karasubazar from 1866 to 1899. Born in Jerusalem and invited to the Crimea from the Ottoman Empire, Medini is known as outstanding Jewish thinker, the author of the encyclopaedic work *Sedeh Hemed* in 12 volumes. A number of Krymchaks followed Medini after his departure to Hebron in 1899<sup>42</sup>. The next wave of the Krymchak resettlement to Palestine took place in 1921/1922. Many Krymchaks emigrated to Palestine in this period avoiding the famine and turmoil after the revolution in the Crimea. According to Dan Shapira, from the 1930s through the 1950s, in Hebrew, the term “Krymchak” meant as much as a “hard man who is doing physical work”. The Krymchak community in *Erets Yisrael* had its own synagogue in Tel Aviv which functioned according to Sephardic religious tradition until 1981.

In the 1990s the diminishing Krymchak community of Israel was reinforced by the emigrants from the former USSR. M. Chulak, an active member of the “Krymchaklar” society, having emigrated to Israel, tried to organize Krymchak repatriates into a community and celebrate tqun ceremonies. Unfortunately, at the moment the Krymchak community in Israel is not organized and does not maintain any community life. Mikhail Gurdzhi, the graduate of the History Faculty of Simferopol University, is perhaps the only Krymchak historian currently living in Israel. He is the author of several important articles on the history of the Krymchaks in the Crimea.<sup>43</sup>

Most members of the community prefer getting assimilated by local Israel culture and forget about their Krymchak origin. One may explain their unwillingness to preserve their ethnic identity by the fact that most of the Krymchak emigrants to Israel possessed virtually no knowledge about their ethnic and cultural traditions. Mixed marriages with local Jews was another major factor which promoted rapid assimilation of the community.

Krymchak emigration to **America** began during the First World War, in 1915, and continued until 1925. In 1920 these emigrants organized “The First Brotherhood of Crimean Jews of America”. Saadiyah Mangupli was the

first president of the brotherhood; among its members one could find representatives of such families as Ashkenazi (Achkinazi), Mangupli, Rabeno, Hakhamov, Kokoz, Cohen, Tokatly, Purim and others. In 1938 and 1939 many Krymchaks emigrated to USA as a result of Arabic pogroms. At that moment the Krymchak community of America consisted of about 250 Krymchaks. Most Krymchaks managed to emigrate to USA thanks to the help of the family of Manya Ashkenazi<sup>44</sup>. The family of Ralph Bakshi was among those who emigrated from Palestine to America in 1939. Later Ralph Bakshi became one of the most important producers of cartoons<sup>45</sup>. A few Krymchak families emigrated to America after the war. In the 1940s the Brotherhood purchased a piece of land in the territory of Long Island and established there two Krymchak cemeteries. The local Krymchaks normally spoke the Krymchak ethnolect, English, Russian, and Yiddish<sup>46</sup>. They used the house on Saratoga Avenue in Brooklyn as a synagogue. The Brotherhood carried out philanthropic activity and collected money to help the Krymchaks in the Soviet Union, and the Jews in Israel and the Crimea. After the war the local community did not remain estranged from assimilation processes: most of them had mixed marriages with American Jews. Since the 1990s the office of the president of the Brotherhood is occupied by Israel Rubin (Rabeno). In his opinion, several hundred descendants of Krymchak emigrants are still living in America. Many of them do not have surnames of their ancestors, have no idea about Krymchak history and culture, and consider themselves American citizens of Jewish and/or Krymchak origin. Most American Krymchaks are well-educated people, physicians, teachers, etc. According to Israel Rubin, none of them remembers the Krymchak ethnolect, and only some – remember Russian<sup>47</sup>.

Dispersed Krymchak families live in other countries, such as Canada, Germany, etc.<sup>48</sup> Some readers may be excited to know that the dry cargo ship “Krymchakhlar”, which sails under Cambodia flag, belongs to “Sovfracht”. Krymchak D.Yu. Purim is the head of the assembly of directors of this organization<sup>49</sup>.

### **Problem of the ethnic identity of the Krymchaks**

As it has been shown above, the Krymchaks live in different countries of the world. Paradoxically, the Krymchaks have no unanimity of opinion about their ethnic history, origin, and identity. The identity of the American and Israel Krymchaks seems to be comparatively straightforward: they consider themselves either “Krymchaks of Jewish origin,” or “Jews of Krymchak origin”. Some of them prefer to forget about their Krymchak origin and identify

themselves with their larger ethnic environment (Jews in Israel; Jews and Americans in the USA). Others simply do not delve too deeply into the problem of their ethnic origin.

The identity of the Krymchaks living in the former USSR is much more convoluted. At the moment the community is divided into several different groups. One can distinguish several most important of them: followers of Jewish identity; protagonists of Turkic origin of the Krymchaks; “apathetic,” and “hesitant” ones. Followers of Jewish identity openly or secretly consider Krymchaks people being of Jewish origin and they take part in the activity of “Hesed”, “Sokhnut”, and other Jewish organizations.<sup>50</sup> Lev Kaya (1912-1988), son of the aforementioned Isaac Kaya, was perhaps the most active supporter of Jewish identity of the Krymchaks. Author of numerous hitherto unpublished works on the history of the Karaites and Krymchaks, Lev Kaya always considered himself a Jew-Krymchak and was sorry that he could not get proper religious education. “I am Jewish! – with emotion exclaimed he in his letter to Abram Torpusman. – I am not guilty that circumcision was the only thing that I managed to do. Furthermore, a few times I managed to put on a *tefilin*.”<sup>51</sup>

“Apathetic” Krymchaks normally prefer not to think too much about their ethnic origin – even though they normally continue considering themselves to be Krymchaks and have no desire to forget about it. “Hesitant” ones do not have any particular views regarding the ethnic history of the Krymchaks. They know the arguments of the followers of “Jewish” and “Turkic” parties, but do not develop any homogenous opinion about the problem of the ethnic origin of the Krymchaks for themselves. “We ourselves do not know whence we came here [i.e., to the Crimea],” – this is how they answer the questions regarding the ethnic origin of the Krymchaks.

Views of the followers of the “Turkic theory” are especially interesting. Some of the Krymchaks (especially their intellectual and ideological leaders) are of the opinion that their people are the product of the long mixture of various (mostly Turkic) ethnic groups. The problem of presence of the Turkic element in the identity of the Krymchaks certainly deserves to be analysed in detail. Dejudaiization processes among the Krymchaks and the mythologeme about their “Turkic” and “mixed autochthonous” origin are not new. Their roots go back to the most tragic period in the Krymchaks’ life, 1941/1942, when the community (first time in its history!) declared its non-Jewish origin in the petition directed to the Nazi administration in the occupied Crimea. As has been mentioned, in terms of their life-style and traditions the Krymchaks were very similar to the local Karaites. Their only dif-

ference was the Krymchaks' recognition of the Talmud and lack of the elaborated mythologeme about their non-Jewish origin. Among the Karaites such mythologeme existed approximately from the end of the nineteenth century. That is why in 1939 Nazi ideologists, with some unwillingness, accorded the Karaites the status of non-Semitic population. Having received the news about the salvation of the Karaites, who managed to trick the Nazis by "proving" their Turkic origin, the Kerch Krymchaks with Isaac Kaya as their head also decided to act. Like the Karaites, they tried to pose themselves as descendants of the Turkic Khazars, who accepted Judaism as their religion in medieval times. They submitted to the Nazi administration of the city several documents about the history of the Krymchaks which apparently attested their non-Jewish origin<sup>52</sup>. Unfortunately, this time the Nazis were not fooled by these pseudo-historic statements – most likely because of the fact that they already knew that the Karaites were the only "real" descendants of the Khazars. Nevertheless, it seems that these attempts to trick the Nazis, who invested some time to examine these claims, managed to postpone the immediate annihilation of the Krymchaks. As a result, 800 Krymchaks managed to leave the Crimea and escape from the Nazis after the Kerch landing of Soviet troops at the end of December 1941<sup>53</sup>. Practically all other Krymchaks who lived in the occupied Crimea were doomed to death.

Paradoxically enough, the idea about the non-Jewish Turkic origin of the Krymchaks, which was first formulated during the Holocaust, survived in the war. Roman Freund, who studied dejudaization processes in the Karaite community (a comparative analysis of the Karaite, Krymchak, and mountain Jews' dejudaization seems to be most fruitful<sup>54</sup>), suggested distinguishing "endogenous" and "exogenous" dejudaization, i.e. dejudaization caused by internal and external factors<sup>55</sup>. Whilst analyzing the Krymchak, Tat, and Karaite dejudaization one can clearly see the work of both types of dejudaization. Leaders of the community who remained alive after the war still remembered horrors of the Holocaust and mortal danger of their belonging to the Jewish nation. After the war, against the background of Stalin's purges of Jewish doctors, and later anti-Zionist persecutions, Jewish origin still remained a considerable danger. These "external" factors started the process of endogenous, i.e. "internal", dejudaization of the Krymchak community at that time. Furthermore, while being deprived of their religion during the Soviet times and speaking the Turkic dialect, the Krymchaks felt more and more alienated from the aspirations of Soviet Ashkenazic Jewry.

That is why after the end of the war a part of Krymchak intellectuals (e.g., Evsei Peisah, Boris (Veniamin) Achkinazi) began to disseminate the

idea about autochthonous, Turkic and generally speaking non-Jewish origin of the Krymchaks. Evsei Peisah became the author of the entry about the Krymchaks in the Large Soviet Encyclopaedia where he stated that the Krymchaks represented a combination of Jewish and Turkic settlers with possible admixture of Italian elements<sup>56</sup>. In their correspondence Krymchak leaders openly confessed that they copied their “autochthonous-Turkic” theory from the Karaites<sup>57</sup>. Lev Kaya wrote emotionally about it: “This Karaite mould [Rus. *plesen’*, i.e. idea about non-Jewish origin] became widespread among the Krymchaks likewise”<sup>58</sup>. At the same time the Krymchaks, as well as the mountain Jews-Tats, were actively used by Soviet ideological leaders as the example of the postulate that the Soviet Jews rejected Zionism and understood themselves as people of “local” and “autochthonous” origin<sup>59</sup>. In spite of the fact that many members of the community accepted the theory formulated by Evsei Peisah (1903–1977)<sup>60</sup> and Boris (Veniamin) Achkinazi, other members of the community, first of all Z. Borokhov and Lev Kaya, did not accept it. They publicly opposed it and continued supporting traditional theory of Jewish origin of the Krymchaks<sup>61</sup>. Lev Kaya, for example, wrote about the followers of the Turkic theory: “The Krymchaks made a new idol, a new golden calf, and began with delight dancing around it praising their new deity”<sup>62</sup>. Furthermore, he even tried to gather a communal *beit din* (Heb. “court of justice”) in order to condemn actions of the most fervent protagonists of the Turkic theory<sup>63</sup>.

The idea about the “autochthonous” and “Turkic” origin of the Krymchaks progressed especially rapidly at the end of the 1980s through the beginning of the 1990s, at the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and emergence of ethnic societies in the Crimea. It seems that at that time “external” dejudaization factors stopped being valid because the Soviet Union (and, later Russia and Ukraine) did not follow Stalin–Brezhnev policy of oppressing Jewish population. Furthermore, other “external” factors, namely, Israel’s programme of repatriation stimulated development of Jewish sentiments among the Krymchaks. As a result, at the beginning of the 1990s many Krymchaks realized that they belonged to Jewish nation – and emigrated to Israel. This is why perhaps the voices of those followers of Turkic theory, who remained in the Crimea, became especially loud. Furthermore, observing the development of the Crimean Tatars’ case in the Crimea, the Krymchaks and the Karaites have an example of successful construction of ethnic identity with Turkic component and “autochthonous” claims. Thus, Krymchak leaders could clearly see that by posing themselves as “autochthonous” and “Turkic” group they could get additional subsidies from the state.

So, in the beginning of the 1990s – early twenty first century there was a rise of Turkic sentiments among the Krymchaks<sup>64</sup>.

It is known that every romantic nationalist theory always needs some sort of “scientific” basis and justification. Two historians of Krymchak origin, Boris (Veniamin) Achkinazi<sup>65</sup> and Igor’ Achkinazi, actively popularized and elaborated the Turkic and autochthonous theories of the Krymchaks’ origin in the 1990s. In contrast to the modern Crimean Karaites, followers of Turkic theory of Karaite origin, who have professional philologists and/or historians in their communities, abovementioned Krymchak authors are professional historians, graduates of Soviet and post-Soviet universities. Unfortunately, publications by these scholars, despite their rich historiographic basis and some interesting data, treat Krymchak history in a biased way and use argumentation of a very doubtful character, especially from the field of anthropometry<sup>66</sup>. Highly interesting is that Igor Achkinazi, who himself called the theory about Khazar origin of the Krymchaks a “mythologeme”, nevertheless, came to the conclusion that “a number of material sources, archaeological, ethnographic, and anthropological data together with linguistic features of the Krymchak language [*sic*] and other data, allow one to come to the conclusion that the nucleus of the Krymchak ethno-religious group was formed by poly-ethnic emigrants from the Khazar Kaganate”<sup>67</sup>. Alas, an objective analysis shows that all the aforementioned archaeological, ethnographic and anthropological sources do not support the theory about Khazar origin of the Krymchaks. Furthermore, they disprove it<sup>68</sup>. At the same time thousands of published and archival sources, letters, verses, historical chronicles, treatises, etc., which were composed by the ancestors of modern Krymchaks, on the contrary, attest to the careful preservation of Jewish religious and intellectual values by the Krymchaks. The sources also attest the Jewish identity of the Krymchaks before the Second World War and after it.

The theory about the Turkic origin of the Krymchaks, which was supported by Boris (Veniamin) Achkinazi and Igor Achkinazi using historical data, recently received a highly interesting support from philological and linguistic perspective. The Krymchak philologist, David Rebi, came to the conclusion that the Krymchaks are descendants of the Khazars. Furthermore, he concluded that the Krymchaks are descendants of Altaic peoples who ethnically are not related to the Jews<sup>69</sup>. What made David Rebi come to such a conclusion? It should be said that David Rebi made quite an outstanding achievement. At senior age he managed to revive the command of the Krymchak ethnolect (which Mr. Rebi himself calls only the “Krymchak”

or “Dzhagatay” language) which he had not used since he was seven. He did not only revive it, but also began teaching it in the summer school for the Krymchaks in Simferopol (at the moment it does not exist). Furthermore, he himself learned the Hebrew alphabet and the Krymchak handwriting in order to read original manuscripts in the Krymchak ethnolect. Having analysed a few manuscripts and having published a few articles and translations from the Krymchak ethnolect, Mr. Rebi, unfortunately, came to wrong conclusions regarding the Krymchaks’ ethnic history. According to his own words, before 1989 he thought that the Krymchaks’ ancestors were “the Jews who came to the Crimea from Palestine in the first century”<sup>70</sup>. Having read Krymchak manuscript *conkalar*, however, he discovered there references to *Tengri* (*Tanry*) and *Allah*. On the basis of this discovery he came to the conclusion that “being officially recognized as Judaists, the Krymchaks, in fact, always remained Muslims in their souls...”<sup>71</sup> In his opinion, the Krymchaks inserted the name of the pagan deity of ancient Turks, *Tengri*, in the texts of Jewish prayers as a rudimentary remnant of pagan beliefs of their Turko-Altai ancestors.

Alas, the weakness of this argument is evident to anyone knowledgeable in religious traditions of Turkic-speaking peoples. In the early modern times the term *Tengri* / *Tanry* was used in Turkic languages to denote the concept of God in general, not in the sense of “the pagan deity of heaven among the ancient Turks and Khazars.” In the same way the term *Gott* became the term to denote the concept of God in general, not one of pagan deities of the early Germans. Among the Turkic-speaking Jewish groups the term *Tengri*/*Tanry* was a translation of the Hebrew name of God (*Adonai*, *Elohim*, etc.). This term is to be found in all accessible translations of the Bible into the Karaim language and Karaim ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language. There this term is certainly used in the sense of *Adonai* or *Elohim*<sup>72</sup>. Let us take as an example a bilingual collection of religious poetry in Hebrew edited and translated into the Krymchak ethnolect by Nissim Levi Chakhchir. The Hebrew term *Elohim* is translated into the Krymchak ethnolect as *Tanry* in all verses and songs published in this collection<sup>73</sup>. Among the Kypchak-speaking Armenians of Podolia and Galicia the term *Tengri* was used for the translation of the texts of the Old and New Testament – and certainly had nothing in common with the pantheon of ancient Turks<sup>74</sup>. There are thousands similar examples of the use of the term *Tengri* by Turkic-speaking peoples.

Similar is also the situation with the term *Allah* and its use among Turkic-speaking peoples. The term *Elohim*/*Adonai* is normally translated as

*Allah* in the modern translation of the Bible into the Turkish language<sup>75</sup>. The term *Allah* is often used by Jewish Turkic-speaking groups to translate the Hebrew terms *Elohim* and *Adonai*<sup>76</sup>.

Thus, not a single linguistic, ethnographic, epigraphic and other type of source is able to prove non-Jewish origin of the Krymchaks. Unfortunately, today the Turkic theory of the ethnic origin of the Krymchaks, despite its absolute pseudoscholarly character became the main version of Krymchak ethnic history in the Crimean and Ukrainian press. Furthermore, it is recognized by the majority of the academic institutions in the Crimea and Ukraine<sup>77</sup>. In our view, the non-academic character of this theory was convincingly demonstrated by Andrei Mal'gin, who was one of the earliest Crimean scholars to pay attention to dejudaization process among the Karaites and Krymchaks: "Jewish culture, whose monuments can be traced in the Crimea at least from the first century B.C. does not need any additional arguments to prove its native presence in this land; to prove it one does not need to look for any Turkic or other evidence"<sup>78</sup>.

In the conclusion I would like to attempt to forecast the future of the Krymchak community. The majority of my respondents, as a rule, with sorrow stated that "Only memories about us will remain in twenty-year time". I do not think that one necessarily has to be so pessimist. The press speaks about disappearance of the Karaites from the beginning of the twentieth century – and yet, the Karaite community, be it in Europe, Israel or USA, is still alive. Furthermore, I would like to point out as an example of the Samaritan community which managed to revive and to some extent restore itself: in 1901 there were only 150 Samaritans, while in 2004 – 654<sup>79</sup>. In my opinion, the continuation of the existence of the community depends first of all on the Krymchaks themselves. If they will be able to make Krymchak youths of the Crimea, Russia, and Israel interested in Krymchak history and culture – who knows, maybe we shall see the renaissance of this most interesting ethnic group.

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**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Mikhail Chlenov (Moscow) who inspired me to compose this article. I am also grateful to Yuri Purim, the head of the Krymchak society “Krymchakhlar,” Raisa Berman (Levi), David Rebi, Ludmila Bakshi and other members of the Krymchak community who shared with me their memories about the Krymchaks. A word of thanks also goes to the Krymchak historian Mikhail Gurdzhi (Israel), Israel Rubin (Rabeno), the head of the Brotherhood of Crimean Jews of America, and Professor Dan Shapira (Israel).

<sup>2</sup> Concerning his biography, see *Korobach N. Vydayushiysya prosvetitel' I.S. Kaya // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 30. Gurdzhi M.Ya. Grazhdanin, uchenyi, che-lovek // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 32–37.*

<sup>3</sup> *Kaya I.S. Po povodu odnoi krymchakskoi rukopisi // Izvestiya Tavricheskogo Obshstva Istorii, Arheologii i Etnografii. 1927. №1 (58).P. 100.* The term “Krymchaks-Jews” («крымчаки-евреи») was first used on Aug., 18 1859 in the petition of Jewish land-owners of the colony Rohatly-koy to petite bourgeoisie of the town Karasubazar («обращении евреев-землевладельцев колонии Рогатликой в мещанство города Карасубазара»). In the documents of the 18th–19th centuries the Krymchaks called themselves in Tatar “srel balalary” or in Hebrew “benei Yisrael”, i.e. “sons of Israel”. In early modern Tatar sources the Krymchaks were called yehudiler and chufutlar. Both terms should be translated as “Jews”; the term chufutlar had somewhat derogatory character. There is no doubt that the term “Krymchaks-Jews” (later shortened to “Krymchaki” in Russian and “krymchahlar” in Tatar) is a calque from Crimean Tatar “yahudiler kyrymcha” (i.e. “Jews in the Crimean manner/way”). This is how, apparently, the Turkic-speaking Crimean Rabbanite Jews could be called by the Russian administration. For more information on Krymchak history: see Krymchaki // *Kratkaya evreiskaya enciklopediya. Tom 4. Ierusalim, 1988. S. 603–612. Kupovetskii M.S. Dinamika chislennosti i rasselenie karaimov i krymchakov za poslednie dvesti let // Geografiya i kul'tura etnograficheskikh grupp tatar v SSSR. M.: Nauka, 1983. P. 75–93; Kupovetskii M.S. K etnicheskoi istorii krymchakov // Etnokontaktnye zony v Evropeiskoi chasti SSSR. M., 1989. P. 53–69; Zand M. Notes on the Culture of the Non-Ashkenazi Jewish Communities Under Soviet Rule // Jewish Culture and Identity in the Soviet Union. N.Y.; L., 1991. P. 378–444; Kizilov M. Krymchaki // Ot kimmeriicev do krymchakov. Izd. 2. Simferopol', 2004. P. 270–283; Khazanov A. The Krymchaks: a Vanishing Group in the Soviet Union. Jerusalem, 1989; Keren I. Yahadut Krym mi-kadmutah ve-'ad ha-shoah. Jerusalem, 1981. The article by Dan Shapira is especially important for*

understanding relations between the Karaites and the Krymchaks: *Shapira D.* Some Notes on the History of the Crimean Jewry from the Ancient Times Until the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, With Emphasis on the Qırımçaq Jews in the First Half of the 19th Century // *The Jews and the Slavs.* 2007 (in press).

<sup>4</sup> *Weissenberg S.* Familii karaimov i krymchakov // *Evreiskaya starina.* SPb., 1913. Vyp. 3. P. 384–399; *Kotler I.* Crimean Jewish Family Names // *Avotaynu* 5:1 (1989).

<sup>5</sup> E.g., *Rebi D.I.* Krymchakskii yazyk. Krymchaksko-russkii slovar'. Simferopol, 2004. P. 4; *Krymchaki/ Sost. V.M. Lombrozo, D.I. Rebi.* Simferopol, 2001. P. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Concerning this, see more in *Shapira D.* Tendencies and Agenda in Karaite and Karaite-related Studies in Eastern Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century // *Pinkas* 1 (2006). P. 333–355.

<sup>7</sup> *Henderson E.* Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia. London, 1826. P. 334. For more information on the mythologeme about the use of the “Dzhagatay” language by the Krymchaks, see: *Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... P. 3–4, 48–51. On the real Dzhagatay language, see: *Eckmann J.* Das Tschaghataische // *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamentae/* Ed. by J. Deny, K. Gronbech, H. Schneel, and Z. Velidi Togan. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1959. Vol. 1. P. 138–160.

<sup>8</sup> *Erdal M., Ianbay I.* The Krimchak Book of Miracles and Wonders // *Mediterranean Language Review* 12 (2000). P. 39–139; *Ianbay I., Erdal M.* The Krimchak Translation of a Targum Šeni of the Book of Ruth // *Mediterranean Language Review* 10 (1998). P. 1–53; *Yanbai Ya.* Tyurkskaya literatura krymchakov // *Materialy po istorii, arheologii i etnografii Tavriki.* Vyp. 8. 2001. P. 502–509; *Polinsky M.* The Krymchaks: History and Texts // *Ural-Altische Jahrbücher/Ural-Altaiic Yearbook* 63 (1991). P. 123–154.

<sup>9</sup> “Sfat tatar ha-medubaret beinenu poh bi-medinat Qrym” (see the title page of *Seder agada shel' Pesah.* Translated into Tatar by Nisim Levi ben Mordehai Chahchir. Petrokov, 1904).

<sup>10</sup> *Chernin V.Yu.* O poyavlenii etnonima «krymchak» i ponyatiya «krymchakskii yazyk» // *Geografiya i kul'tura etnograficheskikh grupp tatar v SSSR.* M.: Nauka, 1983. P. 98.

<sup>11</sup> *Kaya I.S.* Po povodu... P. 100.

<sup>12</sup> See the letter by Shlomo ben Yaakov Tat-Bohor to A.D. Peisah (1953). D.I. Rebi's personal archive.

<sup>13</sup> *Kupovetskii M.S.* Dinamika chislennosti... P. 84–86; cp. *Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... P. 16–17.

<sup>14</sup> *Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... C. 33. Unfortunately, at the moment the Crimean mass-media and modern Krymchak authors use exclusively the term qa'al to denote their houses of prayer. They seem to be unaware of the fact that the word qa'al (from Heb. qahal) is merely a colloquial term to denote more literary Heb. beit ha-kneset or synagogue (cf. Yiddish “Shul”). According to Dan Shapira, this word was loaned by the Krymchaks from Judezmo (private communication).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> *Spektor Sh.* Shoat ha-yehudim ha-krimchakim bi-tkufat ha-kibush ha-natsi // *Pe'amim* 27 (1986). P. 19–25, esp. 25; *Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... P. 20–23, 34; cf. *Loewenthal R.* The Extinction of the Krimchaks in World War II // *American Slavic and East European Review* 10: 2 (1951). P. 130–136.

<sup>17</sup> *Filonenko V.I.* Krymchakskie etudy // *Rocznik Orientalistyczny.* 1972. № 25. P. 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Achkinazi I.V.* Krymchaki. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk. Simferopol, 2000. P. 136.

<sup>19</sup> From Internet resources one may use the collection of the articles about the Krymchaks available on: [www.turkolog.narod.ru/info/N10.htm](http://www.turkolog.narod.ru/info/N10.htm). Until recently there were two community sites in English ([www.krymchaki.com](http://www.krymchaki.com)) and Russian languages. Unfortunately, none of them is functioning at the moment.

<sup>20</sup> *Sumina N.* Krymchane – uchastniki rabochei gruppy OON // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 60.

<sup>21</sup> *Achkinazi I.V.* Krymchaki. Kratkii ocherk etnicheskoi istorii // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Concerning his biography, see: *Bakshi N., Pirkova D. V.M.* Lombrozo // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 33–34.

<sup>23</sup> Concerning his biography, see: *Mashchenko A.* Predposlednie krymchaki // Krymskoe vremya. 17.04.2003. № 70. P. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Concerning the museum, see: *Bakshi N.* Edinstvennyi v mire... (O muzee krymchak-skogo naroda) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 41–42; *Purim Yu.* Muzei rasshryaetsya // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 65–66.

<sup>25</sup> A. Khazanov was able to locate only one conka in Simferopol' in 1984 (*Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... P. 6). In January 2007 I worked with the conkalar by S. Bakshi (1895) and I. Gabbay (1914) (at the moment in David Rebi's private collections). Much more impressive are collections of Krymchak manuscripts in St. Petersburg and Jerusalem archives (*Yanbai Ya.* Tyurkskaya literatura... P. 502–509).

<sup>26</sup> Concerning his biography, see: *Zin'ko V.* Pamyati I.V. Achkinazi (25.06.1954 – 10.03.2006) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol, 2007. P. 28–29.

<sup>27</sup> Concerning his biography, see: *Yansen S.* Poslednii iz krymchakov // Krymskoe vremya. 19.02.2003. № 31. P. 6; *Yansen S.* Khranitel' yazyka chagatai // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol, 2005. P. 34–39.

<sup>28</sup> See the decision №1093 – 4/04 of 20 Oct. 2004 published in “Krymchakhlar” № 1 (2005). P. 86.

<sup>29</sup> In Simferopol' (33 Krasnoznamennaia Street), Eupatoria (8 Stepovoi Alleyway), and Belogorsk. None of these monuments preserved its original style and can hardly be used for religious purposes. Nevertheless, the buildings of the synagogues remained as well as some decorative elements, such as the Stars of David, etc.

<sup>30</sup> In 2004 a memorial sign was erected on site of the execution of the Krymchaks in the vicinity of Udarnoe village (this village had been earlier called Krymchak; it is located in the vicinity of Belogorsk) (*Sumina N.* Oni gibli ryadom s rodnym domom // Respublika Krym. 3.12.2004. № 47. P. 10).

<sup>31</sup> *Yakimova N.* Poslednii krymchak // Pervaya Krymskaya. 3.12.2004. P. 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Purim M.* Mihail Piastro: «Krymchakam ne nuzhen status korenного naroda» // Krymskoe vremya. 10.08.2005. № 88. P. 20; *Purim M.* V Krymu ne tol'ko govoryat – dumayut na russkom yazyke // Krymskoe vremya. 3.08.2006. № 85. P. 6.

<sup>33</sup> In 2002 I was honoured to meet Raisa Petrovna (Rachel, daughter of Pinhas) Berman (Levi), who still could speak the Krymchak ethnolect. Mrs. Berman informed me that she still could compose poetry in this language. Recordings of her songs were included in the collection of the Krymchak folk-music (see below). According to Mark Purim (Agatov), the late Mr. David Weinberg (Eupatoria) also could speak the Krymchak ethnolect (*Purim M.* Legenda o rastrelyannom narode // Krymchakhlar 2–3 (2007). P. 150). Mr. David Rebi is able to read manuscripts composed in the Krymchak ethnolect. These seem to be prob-

ably the only remaining Krymchaks who are capable of speaking / reading the Krymchak ethnolect today.

<sup>34</sup> The word tqun comes from Heb. tiqqun (“correction, establishing of order” – a Qabbalistic term used in some prayers). According to Mikhael Zand, this term is an abbreviation of tiqqun yom ha-zikkaron (“establishing order to celebrate a memorial day”) or tiqqun ha-neshamah (i.e. “establishing order to pray for the soul”), i.e. the Krymchak analogue of the Ashkenazic Yortsait (*Zand M. Notes...* P. 399–400).

<sup>35</sup> *Manevich I. T'kun. Istoki tradicii // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 79–81; Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk... P. 126–128; Zand M. Notes...* P. 399–400.

<sup>36</sup> *Sumina N. Pamyati T.I. Trevgoda (16.11.1919 – 1.01.2007) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 30–31.*

<sup>37</sup> *Krymchakskie pesni: The Folklore of the Krymchaks/ Sost. L.S. Bakshi, A. Bakshi. Solyd Records, 2004. This disc appeared thanks to the support of the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund and VAAD of Russia. For a review see: Charukhova E. Muzyka na fone vzdokhov // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 43–44.*

<sup>38</sup> *Tkachenko A. Son krymchaka, ili Otorvannaya zemlya. M.: Hroniker, 2007. Tkachenko's mother was O. Zengina from Karasubazar (Belogorsk). Concerning his biography and contacts with the famous Soviet poet, Andrei Voznesenskii, see: Sumina N. «Rov»: postskriptum // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 112–117.*

<sup>39</sup> *Багинская (Гурджи) В.И. Народные песни и пословицы крымчаков* <http://www.turkolog.narod.ru/info/1432.htm> Concerning her biography see: *Baginskaya V.I. Bez etogo ne myslyu zhizni // Krims'ka svitlicya. 1.11.2002. № 44; Baginskaya V.I. Vstrecha // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 141–143.*

<sup>40</sup> *Khazanov A. Krymchaks... P. 19. Concerning the Krymchak community of Sukhumi, see the article by Mikhail Chlenov in this volume.*

<sup>41</sup> *Sumina N. Krymhane – uchastniki rabochei gruppy OON // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 60.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ben-Yaakob A. Medini, Hayyim Hezekiah ben Raphael Elijah (1832-1904) // Encyclopedia Judaica 11. Jerusalem, 1971. P. 1216–1217.*

<sup>43</sup> *Gurdzhi M.Ya. Grazhdanin, uchenyi, chelovek // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 32–37; Gurdzhi M.Ya. Istochniki po etnicheskoi istorii krymchakov // K'asevet. 1991. № 1/21. P. 18–19; Gurdzhi M.Ya. K istorii blagotvoritel'noi deyatel'nosti krymsko-iudeiskoi obshiny (unpublished). Unfortunately, at the moment Mikhail Gurdzhi is not engaged in scholarly activity.*

<sup>44</sup> See the unique family chronicle about travel's of Manya Ashkenazy's family from the Crimea through Turkey to Palestine and from there to America: *Ashkenazy M. To Live in Peace. The Story of Manya Ashkenazy: An Autobiography (unpublished; see: <http://members.aol.com/askinazy/page2.html>).*

<sup>45</sup> See his official site: [www.ralphbakshi.com](http://www.ralphbakshi.com). Bakshi was the author of the first cartoon version of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings (1978), scandalous cartoon Fritz the Cat (1972), and many others.

<sup>46</sup> *Keren Y. Yahadut... P. 318.*

<sup>47</sup> This part of my article is based on my correspondence with Isaac Rubin. In addition to his letters, I should also mention his unfinished article “The First Brotherhood of Crimean Jews of America” (4 pp. + copies of the minutes of the Brotherhood assemblies in

1946/7); idem, Who were the Krimchaks? A Vanishing Remnant of Rabbinic Jews (popular monograph about the Krymchaks; in preparation); idem, Chanukah Came Early... (memoirs about Isaac Rubin's trip to Israel and accidental encounter with his Krymchak relatives in Beit Shemesh; available on [www.turkolog.narod.ru](http://www.turkolog.narod.ru)); see also *Rubin I. Pervoe bratstvo krymskikh evreev Ameriki // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 71–73.*

<sup>48</sup> To give an example, Isaac Khondo, the author of the most interesting memoirs about his life in the Crimea and USSR from 1917 onwards (*Хондо И. Крымчак из города Капачубазара www.turkolog.narod.ru/info/152.htm*).

<sup>49</sup> *Purim Yu. Nash okeanskii tezka // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 64–65.*

<sup>50</sup> Preservation of the elements of Jewish identity by the Krymchaks after the war can be clearly seen in the series of interviews conducted by Velvl Chernin (*Khazanov A. Krymchaks... P. 55*). According to Lev Kaya, only 5–7 Krymchaks attended synagogues in the 1970s (L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 19.11.1979. P. 3–4 // Archive of VAAD of Russian in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya). Some Krymchaks began attending the Hassidic synagogue in Simferopol' after 1991.

<sup>51</sup> L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 29.01.1983. P. 5 // Archive of VAAD of Russian in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya. Concerning Lev Kaya's biography see: *Gurkovich V.N. Etnograf po prizvaniyu (Lev Isaakovich Kaya) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 51–59*. A part of Kaya's archival collection, which represents a unique source of information concerning the history of the Karaites and Krymchaks, is currently kept in VAAD of Russia (I am grateful to Mikhail Chlenov, the president of VAAD, for giving me permission to use this collection). Especially interesting is perhaps Kaya's unpublished work "Materialy o krymchakakh KOGA" // Archive of VAAD of Russian in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya. See also: *Belyi O.B. Nauchnyi arhiv L.I. Kaya v Bahchisaraiskom gosudarstvennom istoriko-kul'turnom zapovednike // Istoriya i arheologiya Yugo-Zapadnogo Kryma. Simferopol', 1993. P. 239–246.*

<sup>52</sup> *Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk... P. 122* (with reference to Z. Borokhov's memoirs). This is why the Nazi head of the police and SD, who apparently read these documents, mentioned that the Krymchaks "stated that they were a branch of Tatar tribe" ("...утверждают, что являются ветвью татарского племени...": *Unichtozhenie evreev v SSSR v gody nemeckoi okkupacii/ Red. I. Arad. Ierusalim, 1992. P. 181–182*). Lev Kaya, the son of Isaac Kaya, mentioned that the statement that his father proved non-Jewish origin of the Krymchaks was a lie invented by E. Peisah and B. Achkinazi (L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 19.01.1982. P. 7 // Archive of VAAD of Russia in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya). At the moment I can not decisively state who is right in this discussion.

<sup>53</sup> *Purim Yu. Moe voennoe detstvo // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 123–125.*

<sup>54</sup> E.g., *Dymshitz V. Bor'ba za sushestvitel'noe // Narod knigi v mire knig. Evreiskoe knizhnoe obozrenie 50 (2004). P. 6–13.*

<sup>55</sup> *Freund R. Karaites and Dejudiaization: A Historical Review of an Endogenous and Exogenous Paradigm. Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion 30. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1991.*

<sup>56</sup> *Peisah E. Krymchaki // BSE. 3rd ed. Vol.13. M., 1973. P. 518.*

<sup>57</sup> *Khazanov A. Krymchaks... P. 37–38.* Khazanov had access to letters by the leaders of the Krymchak community in the 1980s.

<sup>58</sup> L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 15.04.1981. P. 6 // Archive of VAAD of Russia in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya.

<sup>59</sup> *Khazanov A. Krymchaks...* P. 47.

<sup>60</sup> Concerning his biography see: *Achkinazi I.V. Sokhranit' dlia budushchikh pokoleonii // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 27–29; Borokhov A.D. Leningradskie vstrechi (Vospominaniya o E.I. Peisahe) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 38–41. The Evsei Peisah prize is annually given to those who managed to make an important contribution to the history and culture of the Krymchaks.*

<sup>61</sup> *Kupovetskii M.S. K etnicheskoi istorii...* P. 65.

<sup>62</sup> L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 15.05.1981. P. 1 and 1.01.1983. P. 2 // Archive of VAAD of Russia in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> E.g., *Lombrozo V.M. Vklad krymchakov v istoriyu i kul'turu Kryma // Vestnik Krymskih chtenii I.L. Sel'vinskogo. Vyp. 2. Simferopol', 2003. P. 109–124; Levi E. Yu. Krymchaki: etnos i religiya // Bogi Tavridy. Sevastopol', 1997.*

<sup>65</sup> B.M. (V.M.) Achkinazi is the author of a few articles and a collection of Krymchak proverbs: *K'rymchahlyryn' atalar sözy: Poslovicy i pogovorki krymchakov/ Sost. B.M. Achkinazi. Simferopol', 2004. Concerning his biography see: Achkinazi I.V. B.M. Achkinazi (1927–1992) // K'rymchahlyryn' atalar sözy: Poslovicy i pogovorki krymchakov/ Sost. B.M. Achkinazi. Simferopol', 2004. P. 3–7.*

<sup>66</sup> In his early publications Igor' Achkinazi did not have a unanimity of opinion regarding the Krymchak's ethnic history (e.g., *Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Proiskhozhdenie. Veroispovedanie. Istoriya. Kul'tura. Tradiciya // Spektr. 1997. №3 (17). P. 22–39; Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Istoriograficheskii obzor po publikatsiyam XIX – nachala XX v. // Materialy po istorii, arheologii i etnografii Tavriki. Vyp. 1. 1990. P. 165–181*). In his later works he started to support the idea of Turkic and autochthonous origin of the Krymchaks (e.g., *Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki // Tyurkskie narody Kryma: Karaimy. Krymskie tatars. Krymchaki/ Otv. red. S.Ya. Kozlov, L.V. Chizhova. Seriya "Narody i kul'tury". M.: Nauka, 2003. P. 371; Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Kratkii ocherk etnicheskoi istorii // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 8–9*). Nevertheless, his monograph, based on his doctoral dissertation and its chapters dedicated to the twentieth-century events, are quite interesting and useful (*Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk...*). The book by Erdoğan Altınkaynak is nothing but a Turkish retelling of this book (*Altınkaynak E. Kırımçaklar (Kültür – Tarih – Folklor). Haarlem: SOTA, 2006*). Quite important is also his early article: *Achkinazi I.V. Pogrebal'nyi obryad krymchakov // Materialy po istorii, arheologii i etnografii Tavriki. Vyp. 3. 1993. P. 193–198.*

<sup>67</sup> *Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki (nasledniki hazar: mifologema ili real'nost'?) // Materialy Sed'moi Mezhdunarodnoi konferencii po Iudaïke. Tezisy. Moskva, 2000. P. 21–23.*

<sup>68</sup> All written or epigraphic “sources” allegedly attesting Khazar origin of the Krymchaks were in fact forged by Abraham Firkovich. Not a single linguistic, ethnographic or any other source provides us with any information about mixed marriages among the Crimean Jews, Khazars, Cumans, and other Turkic peoples. Equally fruitless are attempts to prove Khazar origin of the Krymchaks with the help of anthropological data.

<sup>69</sup> *Rebi D.I. Kto my i otkuda? // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 13–17; Rebi D.I. O chem povedali «dzhonki» (novoe o krymchakah) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 24–26.*

<sup>70</sup> *Rebi D.I.* Kto my i otkuda? P. 13.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 17. One should mention the fact that in spite of good knowledge of the Krymchak ethnolect, David Rebi is not too knowledgeable in the field of Jewish tradition and Hebrew. To give one some examples, in his dictionary of the Krymchak language (the only existing dictionary of this ethnolect!) he translates the term *avodah zarah* (Heb. “idolatry”) as “motherland”; *beit-emderash* (sic) as “hut of boughs” and “place for prayers and sermons”, etc. (*Rebi D.I. Krymchakskii yazyk*. P. 53, 77). Other than that, his translations and his dictionary have some scholarly value.

<sup>72</sup> E.g., one of the earliest studies in this field: *Henderson E. Biblical Researches...* P. 334.

<sup>73</sup> *Sefer neimot be-yemin NeTSaH*. Transl. Nisim Levi ben Mordehai Chahchir. Jerusalem, 1902.

<sup>74</sup> *Pritsak O. Das Kiptschakische // Philologiae Turcicae Fundamentae/* Ed. by J. Deny, K. Gronbech, H. Schneel, Z. Velidi Togan. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1959. Vol. 1. P. 86.

<sup>75</sup> *Shapira D. Miscellanea Judaeo-Turkica. Four Judaeo-Turkic Notes: Judaeo-Turkica IV // Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 27 (2002). P. 488.

<sup>76</sup> Henderson mentions that the Karaites avoided the term Allah in order to avoid any association with Islam (*Henderson E. Biblical Researches...* P. 334). Nevertheless, the Karaites also sometimes used this term in their translations of the Bible and other religious and secular texts (e.g., the document № 8595 in the Karaim ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York: *Miller Ph. Karaite Separatism in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Joseph Solomon Lutski's Epistle of Israel's Deliverance*. Cincinnati, 1993. P. 232).

<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, this very point of view was reflected in the book: *Tyurkskie narody Kryma: Karaimy. Krymskie tatory. Krymchaki/* Otv. red. S.Ya. Kozlov, L.V. Chizhova, Seriya “Narody i kul'tury”. M.: Nauka, 2003. It is striking that this absolutely ignorant book, where the Karaites and Krymchaks are called “Turkic peoples” and the word “cenotaph” is twice written as “cenataph” (see *ibid.*, captions to illustrations 6 and 7), was published by such a prestigious (in the Soviet past) academic publishing house as “Nauka”. Furthermore, its title page indicates that the book was approved by four leading academic institutions of the region: Russian Academy of Sciences, Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (see a highly critical review of this book: *Zaitsev I.V. Recenziya na knigu: «Tyurkskie narody Kryma: Karaimy, Krymskie tatory, Krymchaki» // Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*. M., 2005. № 1. P. 167–169. Ilya Zaitsev also informed me that the original version of his review was much harsher than the one that was published).

<sup>78</sup> *Mal'gin A.V. Novye elementy v identichnosti karaimov i krymchakov v sovremenom Krymu // Etnografiya Kryma XIX – XX vv. i sovremennyye etnokul'turnyye processy. Materialy i issledovaniya/* Red. M.A. Aradzhioni, Yu.N. Laptev. Simferopol', 2002. P. 93.

<sup>79</sup> *Snopov Yu.A. Samarit'yane: istoriya i sovremennaya etnosocial'naya situatsiya // Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*. 2004. № 3. P. 81–83.

## THE JOINT IN THE FSU: WHAT IS HAPPENING?

INDEPENDENT POINT OF VIEW BY ISRAELI AND RUSSIAN EXPERTS...

*The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and its policy in the CIS have recently become one of the most disputed topics in the Jewish communities of the Euro-Asian realm. This issue was touched upon in one of the editions of the previous Yearbook, causing an active reaction on the part of the Russian Jewish community.*

*The New York newspaper “My Zdyes” (We Are Here) has recently published an extensive analytical report on the matter, prepared by a group of Israeli and Russian experts speaking on condition of anonymity, ordered by Moscow entrepreneurs who are deeply involved in Jewish philanthropic activities.*

*The editors of the “My Zdyes” newspaper have kindly allowed us to reprint the article; we hope it will revive the discussion on the future of the Jewish community in the CIS.*

### **Introduction**

It was officially announced in the beginning of February 2008 that Elli Malki, finance director and deputy program director of the JDC in the CIS (the so-called “Russian department”) had resigned of his own accord and was to leave the Joint in August. Although the numerous resignations or secretly arranged reorganizations in the “Russian department” have stopped being surprising over the recent years, but Elli Malki’s unexpected resignation has caused many questions:

What was the genuine reason of the resignation?

Would full reorganization of the “Russian department” follow?

Was this resignation an attempt to revise the functions, goals, and methods of the department, or was it simply searching for a scapegoat?

Was an even louder retirement in store for the unchallenged director of the “Russian department” Asher Ostrin?

These questions are caused by the part Elli Malki used to play in the “Russian department” of the Joint. Formally the second voice in the department, according to some opinions, not only was he in fact the “grey eminence” of it, but he also performed such functions as managing all current work and formulating the “ideas” which determined the tactics and strategies of the organization.

The “Russian department” being an absolutely closed structure, and Elli Malki himself probably the least public of its employees, observers are left with guessing what is currently happening in the JDC – the largest Jewish charitable organization whose policy directly influences the fates of hundreds of thousands of Jews in the CIS.

At a glance Elli Malki’s retirement may seem linked to an attempt of the leadership of the Joint to change their strategy in Russia and other states of the region, to return to their mandated goals of community building and cooperation with communities, and to avoid the conflicts which are bursting out in the entire CIS and have recently spilled into Jewish press, including that of the United States.

However, unfortunately it is more likely that his resignation was simply caused by internal confrontation between individual leaders of the “Russian department”, wherein Elli Malki had manipulated budgets and cash flow to create his own “state within a state”. It is also quite probable that this is just “Russian department” director Asher Ostrin’s attempt to decline all responsibility for the Joint’s CIS policy and preserve his own position in an atmosphere of ever-growing criticism and numerous scandals.

Let us postpone the question of reasons which made possible this monopolization of power in its entirety by the finance director of the “Russian department”. Firstly, let us attempt to get a more detailed understanding of his activity’s very character and the financial schemes he used which come across as fatally non-transparent.

### **1. Beginning of the “grey eminence’s” activity – standards and audit**

*This chapter is dedicated to the power struggle within the “Russian department” of the Joint. The struggle led first and foremost to destructive repercussions in the department itself, but one of the main side effects was that any and all ties of partnership between the Joint and local CIS communities were severed.*

When Elli Malki took the post of finance director (then without the status of deputy director), his first and perhaps quite sincere steps had to do with bringing order to the financial system. At that point, the structure of the department was rather complicated, but logical in its own way.

The territorial structure was represented by regional directors, whose subordinates were local Joint representatives, leading small offices in the largest cities of the CIS. Next to this, there were professional sub-departments responsible for program development, though many regional directors were simultaneously responsible for some program areas as well (social work, community centers, education, etc.).

A constant process of negotiations, discussions, and power struggles among the regional directors and heads of sectors determined the Joint's policy in the CIS, budget distribution, etc., while the financial department played a secondary part, servicing the decisions of the leading employees. This situation, apparently, grievously disagreed with the director of Joint-CIS, Asher Ostrin, who was forced to constantly consider the opinions of his brighter and more creative subordinates.

In this situation Elli Malki began fighting for total introduction of so-called standards – rules of program work, of administrative activities, of accountability and budgeting. As there was virtually no discussion of the established standards even inside the JDC, once the initially reasonable requirements rendered absolute became their own opposite. Rules began to regulate even cases which cannot be regulated in principle (e.g., there are known, though luckily isolated, cases of JDC employees demanding that local organizations choose artists to perform concerts on the basis of a tendering contest). As usual, total bureaucratic regulation of everything hindered work; JDC employees had to go cap in hand to Asher Ostrin or Elli Malki every time the rules would not adhere to reality, begging for an exception. Naturally, favorites were allowed to depart from the rules; however (another trait of the “house style”) this in no way implied that in the future they would not be punished for disobeying rules.

Next to setting standards, Elli Malki set out to create a system of financial audit. Malki demanded that there be an auditor in each regional office of the Joint in the CIS to systematically check the activities of local organizations financed by the Joint. According to their job description they reported not to the local Joint representatives, but directly to Elli Malki. Their reports were also sent directly to him, and contrary to conventional standard the audited organizations were not allowed to challenge the contents beforehand. There was no possibility of additional verifications or updates, and even when an organization would hire an independent auditor, the opinion of such an auditor was ignored.

Soon the authority of the JDC's auditors was increased arbitrarily, with the audit they were conducting now reaching far beyond financial account-

ability and touching upon any aspect of the activities of local Jewish organizations. For all that, the qualifications of the auditors in financial matters as such were often highly doubtful, while their total lack of knowledge whatsoever on the essence of the organizations' program activities raised no doubt at all.

Elli Malki rated the quality of an audit report on the level of "frightfulness" of its results. No wonder the auditors often simply made up criticism on the work of the organizations, and the audit reports carried multiple conclusions of systematic violations, abuse, and suspicion of embezzlement. These reports allowed Malki to virtually single-handedly decide to discontinue financing for an organization, which he engaged in with relish. It was often impossible to understand why a given organization suddenly fell in disgrace with the Joint. It seemed that the only goal of this was to create an atmosphere of fear and dependence both among the Jewish organizations and the employees of the Joint itself.

Soon program audit, previously conducted by professional departments, was also in Malki's competence. Having obtained this authority, Elli moved some of the program audit employees to his own department and dismissed the rest. Unsurprisingly, the most capable and proactive workers were discharged, while Elli's staff was refilled with new "girls" who had no qualifications or experience whatsoever, but hung on his every word.

Curiously enough, once he had laid his hands on program audit, Malki soon curtailed this activity, transferring it to his auditors in local offices; the audit was replaced with the requirement for Jewish organizations and local JDC offices to get prior permission for virtually any step they made from Jerusalem, i.e., Elli.

After program audit was moved to the financial service, program departments were stripped of the last of their authority and were virtually liquidated. Regional directors were also deprived of almost all authority, as every decision was now made by the financial service according to the rules it had developed and the audit it had conducted. The staff of local Joint offices in the CIS grew exponentially, but in fact most of their work was limited to obtaining permissions from the financial service of the "Russian department". Naturally, all of its Jerusalem office had been transformed in its entirety into a vast financial service reporting to Elli Malki, who had moreover accrued the status of deputy director of the "Russian department".

The enlargement of JDC offices in the CIS and their virtual subordination to Elli Malki were performed under the motto of "delegating powers to local communities", although clearly the Jewish communities themselves had

no part in the process, and the offices of the Joint had no part in the local communities. On the contrary, during the aforementioned restructuring Elli provoked serious conflict with local Jewish organizations, simultaneously creating a weapon to fight them – audit reports. That was the time when the “Russian department” of the Joint stopped even pretending to consider the Jewish communities and organizations of the CIS partners, and ceased all dialogue and discussion of any issues with them. From then on, instead of the retired motto of community development, Asher Ostrin began using the vague expression “capacity building”.

As for the “Russian department” of the Joint, the main results of this stage were that Elli Malki’s personal power mechanism was established; belief in his infallibility and impunity was universally asserted; and all feedback with local communities was eliminated. Another result was that Asher Ostrin became fully immune to criticism from his employees, as any problem became his deputy’s responsibility.

## **2. New stage – real estate**

*This chapter describes the way the “Russian department” of the JDC gradually focused on real estate operations in the CIS, as well as its numerous conflicts with local communities, largely caused by these very operations.*

In the first years of its work in the CIS, the Joint was uninterested in real estate, except maybe slowly acquiring office premises. Cases of it participating in buying real estate for local Jewish communities were rare and unsystematic, and usually initiated by the organizations themselves or by other donors. However, this was the stage when a typical tendency became obvious: the Joint was unwilling (or maybe just incapable) to participate in acquisition, construction, or renovation of real estate in partnership with other organizations, and any building it had invested in had to become its full property. Naturally, this approach led to many wasted possibilities with regard to the resources and contacts of the local communities; once initiated, many projects ended in scandals.

A very famous story has to do with the cancelled construction of a community center in Moscow opposite the Grand Choral Synagogue, where the mayor of Moscow Yury Luzhkov ordered a large lot of land to be allocated for the purpose (a major achievement for the activists of the local community!). However, by demanding that the whole estate become its full property, even though it was only ready to invest part of the requisite funds, the Joint first wrecked negotiations with Moscow businessmen, and eventually the whole project. The allocated lot has been vacant to this day.

Another situation arose in Kishinev, where the Joint used the weakness and legal incompetence of a local Jewish organization and promised it all sorts of welfare to get it to give over the old synagogue building it owned. Once the estate was renovated, its price grew times many, and the Joint found itself owning expensive real estate downtown, which it began renting out both to commercial enterprises and Jewish organizations, including the one that had given it the synagogue building in the first place. The local Jewish leaders blamed the Joint with fraud and went to the law. This story has so far gotten into the press, but not to its end. Court of first instance has ruled in favor of the local community. Currently the appeal of the Joint is under consideration with the municipal court of Kishinev.

The JDC's interest in real estate grew overtime and became an obsession by the year 2000 or so, which is when they got to building huge edifices, the most remarkable of which are the "community houses" in Odessa and St. Petersburg, each worth over \$10,000,000. Their intention to construct an even larger community center in Kiev on the territory of the Babi Yar, was brought to a stop by mass protests both among Kiev residents and beyond. The protesters called the plan of erecting a community center "on the bones of Babi Yar victims" blasphemous and uncoordinated with the local public. After the scandal found its way into American press, the Joint chose to abandon the project.

Building and renovation authority was delegated to a specially formed "building" committee, also headed by Elli Malki, and construction was directly supervised by employees whom Elli had appointed and who reported to him personally. Although none of the buildings were finished in time, and budgets were always overdrawn almost twofold, the committee's authority kept growing. Gradually it came to be that the committee was responsible not just for purely technical issues, but for the following utilization of the buildings as well. The participation of regional Joint directors and local office directors was merely nominal, although some did make fruitless attempts to challenge that.

Naturally, the local Jewish communities were entirely excluded of any and all negotiations. Moreover, in such communities where local lay or professional leaders attempted to show independence and minimal independence, the JDC began getting rid of them, using the previously described audit system (the so-called "contract" audit, where the result is known in advance to be negative).

The first such case to surface was the conflict in Kharkov. The director of the local Chesed was charged with abuse on the basis of a "contract" audit,

but refused to resign, while the Chesed council in turn refused both to fire the out of favor director, and to introduce to its statute clauses that would fully subordinate it to the Joint. In order to subdue the rebellious community, the Joint ceased financing the old Kharkov Chesed and opened instead a new, fully subordinate one. Simultaneously, it removed the director of the Jewish community center, who protested against his organization being relocated to a new building the JDC had bought in a remote part of town. The situation in Kharkov led to numerous scandalous publications in the Jewish press of Ukraine, as well as a lengthy trial which, however, resulted in no change.

It was probably an attempt to prevent repetition of that situation, when the Odessa Chesed director was dismissed by the Joint (which the local Chesed was virtually a department of). Following a “contract” audit, the director was fired (and with obvious breaches of labor legislation at that) right before the Chesed was relocated to a new “community house” – the man could have hindered the planned reorganization of the Chesed. The case is currently in court. To prevent the old director inevitably being restored to his post, the Odessa office of the Joint used a simple scheme as in Kharkov, i.e., cut financing from the old Chesed and founded a new one instead.

The “Kharkov experience” was used by the “Russian department” in Rostov as well. Renovations in the city’s Chesed premises were supervised personally by Moshe Harel, Elli Malki’s closest employee. After the Chesed council expressed dissatisfaction with the price and quality of the repairs, the Joint held a “contract” audit, followed by the demand to fire the Chesed director and replace the council. The director resigned, as did many council members. Entrepreneur Mikhail Gelfer, Chesed council chairman, who had resisted the JDC’s actions to the end, died from a heart attack. Nevertheless, the Joint ceased financing the Rostov Chesed, creating instead a new, more controllable structure. Notably, the local entrepreneurs who had been council members of the Rostov Chesed, soon restored the charitable organizations out of their own funds and invited the old director back, thus showing him their full trust and non-agreement with the findings of the Joint’s “contract” audit.

Perhaps the conflict between the JDC and the Jewish organizations of St. Petersburg, which leaked into the press, was also provoked by the former’s attempt to get rid of local leaders who were asking awkward questions.

How was the construction and repair performed under the supervision of the deputy director of Joint programs in the CIS, chairman of the audit and construction committees, finance director Elli Malki? What grounds did the rumors of abuse, which always follow large-scale building projects in these

parts, have? Was the dramatic budget overdraft just a consequence of complex construction and insufficient competence of Joint employees?

Some information to answer these questions can be derived from the story of Yoram Aberjil, one of the Joint's most experienced employees, who was its regional director in Moscow until the end of 2006. In the spring of that year, tenders were invited for repairs in the Joint-owned building of the Moscow Jewish cultural center in Nikitskaya Street. The tender committee, including, among others, Yoram Aberjil and Moshe Harel (Elli Malki's right-hand man in supervising construction work), evaluated the bids and chose a contractor. The results were sent in for Elli Malki's approval. After a while Aberjil noticed that a different contractor had been commissioned, one from Minsk, not Moscow. To his perplexed questions he was presented with the protocol of the tender committee sitting he had been present at, but with another winner. Outraged, Aberjil turned to Asher Ostrin for explanations and demanded an investigation. As a result, Yoram Aberjil was fired despite Asher Ostrin's recent flattering references at his attestation. The case of his illegal dismissal is currently in court in Israel. It is quite likely that the issue of corruption that he raised will come to court as well. It is known that the New York office of the JDC hired one of Israel's most recognized audit firms to investigate the situation. As the audit results have not been published, the audit is either yet to finish or its results have turned out unfavorable to the Joint.

### **3. Ingenious idea – AREC**

*This chapter describes the creation of a financial system which virtually removed a significant section of the "Russian department's" budget from the control of JDC management.*

It is not clear when and why Elli Malki had the idea to create the commercial structure which was later dubbed AREC (AJJDC Real Estate Company Ltd., often referred to as AREC in the Joint's inside correspondence). Numerous reasons were formulated to substantiate the need for it: minimization of taxes; organization of building maintenance; legal problems with renting out buildings; etc.

At first the fact that Cheseds and community centers conducted commercial activities was named as the reason for creating this company (then named simply CypCo – Cyprus Company). However soon (in December of that same year) the Joint strictly prohibited not just commercial activities, but accepting payment for services (i.e., non-commercial activities) rendered by the Cheseds and community centers. Thus the main reason for creating the

Cyprus Company was eliminated, but the company was still established on offshore territory on Cyprus. The natural question arose – to what end was it created?

The commercial company was registered on offshore territory on Cyprus, in Nicosia. Elli Malki was predictably appointed its director; Asher Ostrin came on the directors' board. The AREC was intended to receive ownership of all Joint real estate in the CIS. Let us note that this real estate whose area is currently about 50,000 meters square and whose price is over \$100 million according even to the humblest estimates, was acquired or built by the JDC for donors' money and intended for Jewish life development and hosting local Jewish organizations. All construction and maintenance budgets were to be transferred to the AREC as well. According to Elli Malki's letter (as the finance director of the Joint) regional directors and local offices were to have no part in either the AREC's activities or buildings owned by it. Beside budgets transferred to the AREC from the Joint, its second source of income and potential profit was to be rent from letting premises to the same local Jewish organizations the buildings were originally constructed for. The Jewish organizations were told that they were paying not rent but rather maintenance expenses, but there were never any documents or estimates to prove it. However, after the AREC came into custody of the buildings, the amounts demanded of the local organizations have grown abruptly and is now dangerously close to the commercial rent prices in these buildings. For example, in some cities where the buildings have already been transferred to the AREC, the rent price for the local Jewish organizations has grown by more than a third, and now equals over 75% of the rent price for commercial organizations leasing premises in the same buildings.

The press informs that in 2007 the Jewish community center of St. Petersburg was asked to pay the full commercial lease price for its premises, also belonging to the JDC. After outraged articles in American papers and personal interference on the part of vice president of the JDC Steve Schweiger, the demand was removed from the agenda, but the next year saw the community center lose the financing the Joint had been supplying for many years. This scandalous event proved the obvious: any Jewish organization that tries to challenge the rent fee Elli Malki, the director of the AREC, asks of it, will have serious troubles with the budget it receives from the Joint, which Elli Malki, the financial director of the Joint in the CIS, is to approve. There have been known cases when Malki delayed budget transfer to the Odessa region for months because of a conflict between the regional director in Odessa and the AREC.

Thus, the two main income sources for the commercial company AREC are – the money the Joint grants for building and maintaining real estates, and the rent paid by local Jewish organizations, which essentially is the same JDC money channelled through these organizations. A third source is the rent which commercial companies pay for premises in buildings transferred to the AREC by Joint free of charge.

As a result of the creation of the AREC the “Russian department” lost control over a vast part of its activities and budget; this obviously complicated control over these activities for the New York office and Board of the Joint. The creation of the AREC commercial structure itself is hardly an example of transparency and casts a shadow on the JDC as a whole.

#### **4. Example – St. Petersburg situation**

*This chapter describes the way the aforementioned system is reproduced in local offices of the JDC. St. Petersburg is used as an example, as the system is at its most vivid there.*

The main Joint-owned real estate in St. Petersburg was the community campus ESOD (abbreviation for Jewish St. Petersburg Community House), built by the organization.

This building of over 7000 meters square cost the JDC almost \$13 million (with a construction budget of \$7 million) and was put into operation in 2006. Like other buildings in the CIS, the ESOD was given over to the AREC. A small part of the building is occupied by the Jewish organizations of St. Petersburg, for which the ESOD was officially intended and which must now pay the AREC a Joint-determined rent fee. Part of the building, approximately equal in area to all the premises of the Jewish organizations together, is occupied by a commercial fitness club, renting the space from the AREC. It is not known whether the club has already begun paying its rent, but in any case this has not alleviated the lease price for the Jewish organizations; rather, the price has risen significantly. Most of the building remains empty or used occasionally.

The management structure of the ESOD building merits a special interest, with the term “non-transparent” doing it no justice. Ever since the ownership rights were transferred (by “gifting”) from the Joint to the AREC, the St. Petersburg office of the Joint (responsible for filling the building with “life”) and the AREC, represented by its officials of various levels, have been struggling for power over the building. As has been mentioned, both these structures are in fact subordinate to Elli Malki (the AREC also reports to him legally), so their constant fights are rather perplexing.

Another organization involved in the struggle is the ESOD foundation of unclear functions, established and controlled by the St. Petersburg office of the Joint. To top it all off, there is a commercial organization working on the premises, Shalevet Ltd., also founded and controlled by the Joint. This company rents out part of the building which it in turn rents from the AREC. Curiously, the director of Shalevet Ltd. is the deputy director of the St. Petersburg office of the JDC. In a way, this scheme copies the combination performed in the top tier of the “Russian department”, as when Elli Malki became leader of the AREC, he remained deputy program director of the Joint in the CIS under Asher Ostrin.

Let us now examine the routes of the money the Joint collects as donations for Jewish life in St. Petersburg. The money is transferred from the “Russian department” in Jerusalem to the office in St. Petersburg according to the budget, in charge of which Elli Malki was until recently. Part of this budget goes on to the ESOD foundation, which in turn transfers part of it to Shalevet Ltd. for rent (let us not forget that both the ESOD foundation and Shalevet Ltd. are officially affiliated with the St. Petersburg office of the JDC), after which Shalevet Ltd. transfers it onwards, also for rent, to the AREC, i.e., back to Elli Malki. There are other routes as well, different from the first only in that the ESOD foundation is replaced by local Jewish organizations, renting rooms in the ESOD building and transferring part of the fees directly to the AREC, and part – to the same company, but through Shalevet Ltd.

The first obvious consequence to this scheme is the “laundering” of the money of any obligations to the donors. The funds American Jews donate for concrete social or educational programs in Russia are turned into funds “earned fairly” by the Joint through rent fees. However, the intricacy and non-transparency of such a system causes more serious suspicions as well.

## **Conclusion**

The “grey eminence” is leaving, but the questions are staying behind: how did his appearance even become possible? And how could he lord it with impunity for so many years in an authoritative organization whose reputation used to be impeccable, but is now entirely tainted with endless scandals and court trials? Let us try and find answers to these questions.

The “Russian department” of the Joint, established in the late 1980s, was for a long time virtually independent both from American donors, less than keen on spending their money in the “faraway savage Russia” and from the end recipients of the donations – weak, poorly organized communities which had barely begun forming in the post-Soviet states. With its Jerusa-

lem location the “Russian department” was even geographically remote from both, and it inevitably got stuck in internal bureaucratic games and began decaying rapidly, like any uncontrolled bureaucratic structure.

Subjective factors played a part as well. The unique historical process of revival in Jewish communities after the fall of the communist empire presented the “Russian department” with elaborate social, economical, and cultural tasks. This required a figure of a wholly different scale in the leading position than was Asher Ostrin. No wonder he readily delegated all his responsibilities to the energetic apparatchik Elli Malki, always ready with a new “project” to solve problems of any level of difficulty. Realization of these projects usually had only destructive repercussions, produced new problems, the tangle got thicker, and the Joint’s reputation deteriorated quickly. By the mid-2007, the policy of the “Russian department” was receiving increasing criticism from the management of the JDC. The numerous trials, the constant conflicts with CIS communities, the scandals leaking into press which vice-president Steve Schweiger had to suppress personally – all this could have been tolerable in a context of success. However, there was none. The AREC brought no tax allowance or profit (as expected), nor success in constructing and managing the buildings. On the contrary: the tax authorities of Moscow presented it with charges which are only natural considering the aforementioned style of transactions. The non-transparent financial system Elli Malki had created began causing increasing suspicion, furthered by the story of Yoram Aberjil. The necessity to support the AREC and its employees became a heavy burden on the JDC’s budget with no prospects of the situation resolving itself. In fact, the AREC became the Joint’s biggest internal problem.

Sergey Vakulchik, acting director of the AREC in Russia, first fell victim to the discontent of the JDC top leadership. He was forced to resign of his own accord. The next “scapegoat” was Moshe Harel, who lost his status as AREC deputy director and was moved to a technical position in the end of 2007. And now – the “grey eminence” himself, Elli Malki, has been made to step down. Who will be next? And will the JDC leadership draw fitting conclusions from this situation? And will someone be held responsible for the degradation of many aspects of Jewish community lives in the CIS in recent years, which was a direct result of the activities of the “Russian department” of the Joint, its organizational and intellectual degeneracy, the incompetence of its employees, and their mass squandering of public funds?

These questions still stand.

*March-April 2008*

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF UKRAINE – 5768 (2007 – 2008): TWENTY YEARS OF REVIVAL

*Vyacheslav Likhachev*  
(Kiev)

In the summer of 2008, the Ukrainian Jewish community celebrated the 20th anniversary of its revival. In June, 1988, in the city of Chernovtsy there was established the first in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic independent legal Jewish-community organization at first, under the name of the Chernovtsy Foundation for the Preservation of the Jewish Cemetery, and then, two months later, renamed as the Chernovtsy Jewish Social and Cultural Foundation, and it still carries the name today.

Over the last 20 years of the development of its institutions, the Ukrainian Jewish community became the most active one not only among the SIC communities but also among the European ones. It is not very large: the 2001 census gives the figure of slightly over one-hundred thousand Jews in Ukraine. According to the estimates of the community leaders, about 250 to 350 thousand people conform to Israel's Law of Return. The Jewish population of the country is getting smaller. According to Nativ (officially Lishkat Hakesher or The Liaison Bureau under the Israeli Prime Minister's office), as of August, 2008, the proportion of Jews born and deceased was one to thirty-three. As per Nativ's forecast, the Jewish community of Ukraine, which is also true for most of the post-Soviet countries, will cease to exist within the next 15 or 20 years. Clearly, the visions of the community's near future, as seen by the leaders of the "autochthonous" Jewish organizations, differ from the above estimation (e.g., see the forecast efforts by Yosef Zisels and rabbi Azriel Khaikin published in the previous issue of our Yearbook). Besides, it appears wrong to use today's proportion of Jews born and deceased as a criterion for the Jewish community's demographic dynamics: if a person who died now was a Jew according to his/her papers filled in years ago, it most certainly means that the person was really a Jew; by contrast, it has been over ten years

already that no ethnic affiliation of the newborns' parents is written down in birth certificates. According to the recent years' Aliyah statistics, for each "labeled" Jew there are six or seven "concealed" ones who conform to the Law of Return. But even if the management of the Nativ does overdramatize the situation, it is quite evident that the depopulation of the community is really taking place and the reason for it is a natural demographic one and not emigration, as was the case in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Today, it is extremely difficult to emigrate to the USA or Germany along the "Jewish path", especially compared with what it was like fifteen years ago. As for the Aliyah (the repatriation to Israel of people and their families who are entitled to it under the Law of Return), in 2007, the number of repatriates, which was about one thousand people, was equal to the number of people returning to the country of origin (it is an estimate based on unofficial data). Besides, it must be noted that gentile relatives of people who are entitled to repatriation comprise today the largest part of the Aliyah.

The feeling that "everybody is going to leave", along with such other pessimistic expectations as the fear of a surge of pogromlike anti-Semitism in the new post-Soviet independent states, that had gone through a verging-on-exaltation national revival, was left in the past late-perestroika period. The Ukrainian Jewish community is not going anywhere anymore and, we hope, will not disappear on account of natural processes. It was formed to remain in Ukraine and to live and develop there. While the Nativ states the fact of the Jewish population of Ukraine being in a disastrous demographic situation, it is also the Nativ that intensifies its efforts in establishing relations with the local community and involving Jews in the community life there, in Ukraine (never before, has the Nativ been concerned about such problems).

Today, even the most biased observers, sincerely wishing all the Galut (Diaspora) Jews to go to Eretz Israel, cannot deny that the Jewish revival in the independent Ukraine has been accomplished. In fact, some leaders of other ethnic minorities regard Jews as a role model in this respect. On the whole, the resulting provisional balance of gains and losses occurred in the course of Jewish revival in Ukraine is safe to be considered positive.

However, with hand on heart, it wouldn't be beneficial to use the anniversary only as an occasion for the cheerful officious-solemn reports in the spirit of "pioneers reporting to the Congress". I think that in analyzing our accomplishments, it would be better to pay special attention to the most pressing problems that face the leaders of the Ukrainian Jewish community.

Though focusing, in particular, on the problems, the author of the present article by no means denies the obvious and impressive achievements

of the Ukrainian Jewish community. Positively evaluating what has been done, we shouldn't stop at that, rather, we must bring into focus the problem spheres in order to better understand what has to be done in the future.

### **Organizational structures: who is who in the Ukrainian Jewish community**

According to the State Committee of Ukraine on Nationalities and Religions, there were 288 Jewish ethnic groups and 290 Judaic religious communities registered as of early 2008. There are also about one hundred Jewish charitable organizations and foundations.

While some of the local (city, regional or oblast) organizations work on their own, most of them are a part of one or another (or of several at once) all-Ukrainian associations. What makes Ukraine different, say, from Russia is that the vertical integration within the community is weak: what we actually have is a framework of independent regional communities only rather formally joined together under all-Ukrainian umbrella structures.

There are only about a dozen of all-Ukrainian organizations and umbrella associations with actually functioning regional branches and local communities. These organizations can be subdivided into local Ukrainian ones ("autochthonous") and delegations of the Israeli or international bodies. Among the latter are the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), The Jewish Agency for Israel (Sochnut), The Gillel Students' Association and a network of Israeli cultural centers. The local Ukrainian organizations, in their turn, can be roughly subdivided into: secular (or 'ethnic' in the post-Soviet classification), such as the Vaad of Ukraine, the Jewish Council of Ukraine, the All-Ukraine Jewish Congress, the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, the Jewish Foundation of Ukraine and the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine; and religious ones; among the latter are the Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine, the Association of Judaic Religious Organizations of Ukraine, the All-Ukraine Congress of Judaic Religious Societies and the Religious Association of Progressive Judaism Communities of Ukraine. The array of these organizations together with the local communities not included in any of the existing all-Ukraine associations, as well as schools, research-and-cultural organizations and mass media outlets – they all comprise the Jewish community infrastructure in today's Ukraine.

Below, I will try to briefly describe the main organizations operating on a national scale.

Delegations of the **Jewish Agency for Israel (Sochnut)** exist in more than 70 cities of Ukraine. The head of the Sochnut representation in Ukraine

and Moldova is Inna Zilbergerts. Though the main objective of the Sochnut is to encourage the Aliyah, we could rather describe its actual activity as community work. Jewish religious holidays are being celebrated in the Sochnut's premises, kids attend drawing circles, young people go there to various clubs and the elderly listen to popular lectures on Judaism and Jewish history. Owing to a variety of educational programs and the interesting way they are presented, the Sochnut, in contrast to the majority of other Jewish organizations, has succeeded in attracting the youth. With a lot of financial resources at hand, the Sochnut has actually built a smart community-like structure enabling them to handle, perhaps, the largest-scale community projects we have today. Among them are summer camps in the Crimea (under the Eichek program) and tours of West Ukraine towns and shtetls (under the Masa Shorashim program) in which hundreds of kids and teenagers from Jewish Heftsiba schools partake. The Jewish Agency publishes the magazine "Gesher" ('bridge' in Hebrew) in Ukraine, and the Sochnut religious education center Midrasha Zionit (<http://www.midrasha.net/>) publishes the newspaper "Land under our Feet". A number of periodicals are also published in the Ukrainian regions. The Jewish Agency supports the <http://www.jafi.kiev.ua/> and <http://www.midrasha.net> Websites. Some regional Sochnut branches also have their own Websites.

The same, with certain modifications, is true in regard to the **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC)**: called to support the Jewish community of Ukraine which was financially weak in the early 1990s, the AJJDC preferred to actually replace it with its own structure. While regional AJJDC offices exist only in four Ukrainian cities, the Heseds (charitable centers) operate in about 70 Ukrainian cities. Heseds not only provide meals, medication and other kinds of assistance to some 120 thousand low-income Jews and their families (it is the maximum figure; in 2008 the number of served clients was smaller, though we haven't got the exact data), but have also formed a network of quasi-communal centers which became, especially in small towns, centers of Jewish life and places for ethnic-cultural leisure activities for the Jewish population. Unfortunately, while supporting the initiatives of the local organizations the management of the AJJDC's "Russian" department has gradually gained control over them. The AJJDC's "Russian" department repeatedly faced harsh criticism for the loose handling of donated money and of the premises handed over to their charity and community centers (see material published in the present issue of the *Yearbook*). However, it wouldn't be fair to confine oneself to mentioning only the existing problems and criticism, and not to point out the tremendously positive role the AJJDC and their communal and

charitable centers have played and are still playing, especially in the province. A number of periodicals, including the *Einikait* (which means “unity” in Yiddish) newspaper are published under the auspices of the AJJDC.

Among the “autochthonous” Jewish organizations worthy of special mention is the Vaad which originated from the Chernovtsy Jewish Foundation (referred to in the beginning of the article).

**The Vaad (Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities) of Ukraine** (chairman Josef Zisels) was officially founded as a separate organization in January of 1991. Before that, it was actually a part of the all-Union Vaad (Confederation of the USSR Jewish Organizations and Communities) founded in December of 1989. Currently, the Vaad of Ukraine unites 266 “secular” and religious organizations from 90 cities and is the most respected Jewish community umbrella structure in Ukraine. The Vaad of Ukraine carries out a number of educational programs and operates children’s summer camps. In 2002, the Vaad of Ukraine was, as one of the founders of the **Euro-Asian Jewish Congress** (EAJC), acting as a continental section of the World Jewish Congress. Josef Zisels is Chairman of the General Council of the EAJC; in Kiev, there operates the Program Bureau of the Congress. The Vaad of Ukraine publishes the *Hadashot* (‘news’ in Hebrew) newspaper and maintains the <http://vaadua.org/> Website.

**The Jewish Council of Ukraine** (JCU, Chairman Ilia Levitas) was founded in 1992 (officially registered in 1993) on the basis of the Republic’s Jewish Culture Partnership organized in 1991, which was, in its turn, the successor of the Kiev Jewish Culture Society set up as far back as 1998 under the auspices of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic’s Culture Foundation. In those years, the Society (later called Council) was founded under the Communist Party guidance as an utterly loyal to the authorities alternative to the Chernovtsy Jewish Foundation (later Vaad). In the independent Ukraine, the JCU maintained, through inertia, its peculiar status of a semi-official Jewish agency loyal to the authorities. This status made the State’s financial support available to the Jewish Council and made it possible for it to take part, “by default”, in all events connected, one way or another, with Jewish activities, such as the annual Babiy Yar memorial meetings. The Jewish Council does not participate much in the community life. The only line of activity in which the JCU is noticeably engaged is the memorialization of the Holocaust victims, especially of the Soviet Jews who took part in World War II. The JCU’s organ is the newspaper *Evreyskiye Novosti* (Jewish News) which is published with financial support from the State Committee on Nationalities and Religions of Ukraine.

**The All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress** (AUJC, President Vadim Rabinovich) was founded in 1997. Originally, with his large financial resources, Rabinovich attempted to bring under his guidance all the Jewish organizations existing at that time. However, for a variety of reasons, the AUJC failed to become an umbrella structure for all the Jewish communities, which was the initial plan. Nevertheless, the AUJC has reached indisputable achievements, including its active presence in the information space. The AUJC's organ is the *VEK* newspaper (the Russian abbreviation for AUJC); it maintains the <http://jewish.kiev.ua/> Website.

The last two years, 2007 and 2008, were, perhaps, successful for the AUJC: it managed to establish fairly amiable relations with some of the Ukrainian Jewish organizations that did not previously collaborate with it and the AUJC has effectively integrated in the European Jewish structures. The AUJC's President, at last, obtained permission to visit Israel which had been a problem for him during the last several years. In October of 2008, Rabinovich, who was elected Vice-President of the European Council of the Jewish Communities, opened the UCJC office in Kiev, took part in organizing the educational forum 'Limmud 2008' in Yalta (the biggest communal educational event in the CIS countries) and came out with a suggestion of how to finance the Jewish schools in Ukraine deprived, in autumn of 2008, of support from the "Or Avner" foundation.

It was back in 1999 that Rabinovich headed the **All-Ukraine Union of Jewish non-governmental organizations "The United Jewish Community of Ukraine"** (UJCU; as a rule, a shorter name is used or they just call it the Jewish Community of Ukraine). Over a period of about ten years, the UJCU acted actually in parallel with the AUJC which gave Rabinovich occasion for calling himself "the President of the Jewish Community of Ukraine". Accordingly, up to 2007, the UJCU congresses were named "Congresses of Ukrainian Jews". However, in October of 2008, at the Fifth UJCU Congress its leadership was not re-elected. The tycoon Igor Kolomoysky, one of the richest men in Ukraine, was elected new president. Though formerly Igor Kolomoysky didn't take much interest in Jewish social activities at the all-Ukrainian level, he was known for providing finance support to the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish community. At the UJCU Congress, the Dnepropetrovsk chief rabbi Shmuel Kaminetsky featured as the UJCU chief rabbi.

Actually, with the advent of the new leadership, the UJCU ceased acting in parallel with the AUJC and entered the all-Ukraine scene of its own accord. It is too early, however, to speak about the nature of the activities of the renewed UJCU and its new priorities as well as to evaluate to what extent the position

of Igor Kolomoysky in the capacity of head of the UJCU will be independent of the position of Vadim Rabinovich, head of the AUJC, or about how active this structure will be. In his “inaugural” speech, Igor Kolomoysky stated his priorities as follows: strengthening the resource base of the union; lending support to the Jewish youth and the elderly; and struggling against ethnic hostility and xenophobia. However, while listening to his speech, one got the impression that it was a ceremonial address drafted under the guidance of the previous UJCU leadership. As of today, the UJCU hasn’t got a single actually functioning community program or a periodical or, even, a Website (the former UJCU Website was “transferred”, as it will be said below, to the Ukrainian Jewish Committee). Yet, reportedly, Igor Kolomoysky is ready to invest heavily in the development of the Jewish infrastructure.

In the same 1997, alongside the AUJC, there had been formed the **Jewish Foundation of Ukraine (JFU)**. Even though the JFU has carried out a number of charitable, cultural, and memorial programs, in terms of its influence and presence in the regions it is inferior not only to the Vaad but also to the AUJC. The founder and the first president of the JFU was the Kharkov businessman and People’s Deputy of Ukraine Alexander Feldman, and its Executive Director was Arkady Monastirsky. Because of their different views on the further development of the organization, they parted at the end of winter in 2008: while Feldman was more bent on the development of “political” activities, Monastirsky was, in a greater degree, for the development of the “cultural” orientation of the JFU. In April of 2008, Oleg Grosman became the new President of the JFU and Monastirsky remained to be its Executive Director. The Kiev Jewish Community Center “Kinor”, which is the JFU’s foothold in the Ukraine capital, publishes the newspaper “Jewish Kiev. The JFU maintains its <http://www.jew-fund.kiev.ua/> Website.

In February of 2008, the former JFU President Feldman together with Eduard Dolinsky (who formerly was the UJCU Executive Director) founded the **Ukrainian Jewish Committee** called upon, similarly to the American Jewish Congress, to become a political, representative and advocacy organization rather than a communal one in the true sense. The JFU soon came to light owing to numerous statements, comments, press conferences and round tables dedicated mostly to various manifestations of anti-Semitism. They haven’t got their own periodical and their informational activities are limited to disseminating statements in the Internet (actually, the former UJCU Website <http://jn.com.ua/> became the JFU Website).

**The Jewish Confederation of Ukraine (JCOU**, the Co-Presidents Sergey Maximov and Eduard Shifrin) was founded in 1999, actually, as an

alternative to the AUJC. However, the Confederation also failed to become a workable union of most of the community structures. To state it in plain words, the JCOU became a secular satellite of the Union of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine (see below). The JCOU is not engaged in any active work. To date, its activities amount to publishing the newspaper “Jewish Observer” and patronage of the Harry and Janet Weinberg Senior Center in Kiev. The Confederation supports the <http://www.jewukr.org/> Website the only updated page of which is the Jewish Observer newspaper.

The religious sector of the Ukrainian Jewish community infrastructure is also diverse.

The oldest religious umbrella structure is The **Union of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine** (UJROU, Executive Director Yevgeny Ziskind, chief rabbi Yaakov Dov Bleich). According to the leadership of the Union, it consists of 62 religious communities (in reality, in the opinion of observers, there are less than 20 of them). Rabbi Yaakov Bleich who headed, in Soviet times, the only Kiev synagogue (in Podol) belongs to the less common in Ukraine Karlin-Stoliner Chassidic group (besides Kiev, the Karlin-Stoliner Chassidic communities exist in Odessa and some other towns). In 1991, rabbi Bleich was declared “chief rabbi of Ukraine” and his followers still consider him to be such. At present, the Union is in close contact with the JCOU. In the recent year or year and a half, the UJROU has substantially strengthened its material standing: next to the Podol synagogue there was built a study center and a hotel is being built, the magazine *Orah Haim* (the Way of Life) is published and the Website <http://www.ujp.kiev.ua/> is supported.

About 15 communities are members of the **All-Ukrainian Congress of Jewish Religious Communities** (AUCJRC). The AUCJRC foothold is the community of the Central Kiev Synagogue (The Brodsky Synagogue). Ten years ago, the building of the Brodsky Synagogue was actually bought out from the municipality, thanks to the financing by V. Rabinovich, and handed over to the community. Formerly, the building was occupied by the Puppet Theater. The President of the AUJC gave money to build new premises for the theater and for its relocation and for the renovation of the synagogue, thus creating a precedent: from that time on, local authorities in different cities of Ukraine refuse to gratuitously transfer synagogue buildings to the communities insisting, instead, that the communities finance the construction or acquisition of new premises for the organizations and establishments that occupy these buildings. Despite occasional chills in relations, the AUCJRC is, actually, the religious image of the “secular” AUJC. In 2005, at the AUJC Congress, the chief rabbi of the Brodsky Synagogue Moshe-Reuven Asman

was elected “chief rabbi of Kiev and Ukraine”, thus becoming, at that time, the third contender to the title. However, as of October 2008, rabbi Asman’s official title is “chief rabbi of the AUJC” which represents the facts. The AUCJRC publishes the magazine “From Heart to Heart” and supports the <http://merkaz.kiev.ua/> Website.

**The Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine** (FJCU, Chairman rabbi Meir Stambler) is the most reputable Jewish religious association in Ukraine with 178 member communities. The FJCU represents the Lubavich Hasidizm (also known as HaBaD), the most dynamically developing school of Judaism over the entire post-Soviet space. (The aforementioned rabbi Asman is also a Lubavich Hasid, though belonging to an opposing to the FJCU HaBaD faction, and has tense relations with the Federation of Jewish Communities of the CIS countries the member of which is the FJCU.)

The Federation, unlike the hierarchic and centralized Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, is a rather pro forma and loose union of local communities quite independent within their “boundaries”. The FJCU headquarters are in Dnepropetrovsk where there is the most active and affluent HaBaD community in Ukraine. They have neither an “all-Federation” periodical of their own (though such had been envisaged) nor a separate Website (more detailed information about the FJCU is found on the Website <http://www.djc.com.ua/> of the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish Community). In recent years, the development of the HaBaD institutions in Dnepropetrovsk is increasingly the result of the activities of big businessmen of Jewish descent, notably, of Gennady Bogolubov and Igor Kolomoysky (G. Bogolubov is the President of the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish Community; I. Kolomoysky, as was mentioned above, ascended to the all-Ukraine status when he headed the UJCU at the end of 2008). Quite a number of the “second-echelon” oligarchs have also chipped in. According to many experts, the Dnepropetrovsk community is one of the most powerful ones not only in Ukraine but in the whole of Eastern Europe and is developing aggressively. In September of 2008, in Dneprodzerzhinsk, a satellite town of Dnepropetrovsk, there was opened a new big synagogue. And already in November, they began building, adjacent to the Dnepropetrovsk “Golden Rose” synagogue, the Jewish Community Center “Menorah” designed to be the biggest in the world community center (according to project, it will consist of seven towers, the tallest of which will be twenty-storey high).

In 2003, the FJCU organized the Congress of Ukrainian Rabbis the participants of which were not only representatives of the Federation, but also rabbi Bleich, rabbi Asman and their supporters. At the Congress, Azriel Haykin,

the former chief rabbi of Brussels, was elected the chief rabbi of Ukraine. Since rabbi Haykin was, perhaps, the only contender to the title who was elected at a general meeting rather than at the congress of the organization he belongs to, over the recent years he was the most legitimate contender to the title of the chief rabbi of Ukraine (though it is clear that the HaBaD rabbis constitute a majority among Ukrainian rabbis). After having moved to Kiev, rabbi Azriel Haykin headed the Chief Rabbinate which, on account of the peculiarity of Haykin's status, functioned as a separate structure and not as a subdivision of the FJCU. The Rabbinate carried out a number of all-Federation programs and also pursued its own information policy (on the First National Channel of the Ukrainian television there was the "613" program sponsored by the Rabbinate). Even though rabbi Bleich did not recognize rabbi Haykin as a chief rabbi and continued to name himself as such, and though in 2005, at the AUJC's Congress, rabbi Asman was declared chief rabbi of Ukraine, actually, over the last five years, it was Haykin who was, perhaps, the most responsible religious leader of the Ukrainian Jewish community (and the most respected, by the "big" Jewish world, Ukrainian rabbi). However, in September of 2008, his five-year tenure expired, and besides, for reasons of health, rabbi Haykin hadn't discharged his duties de facto from spring 2008 on.

The programs of the Chief Rabbinate were financed by the Federation of Jewish Communities (FJC) of the CIS countries. Departure of Haykin coincided with the cutback of financing on the part of the FJC CIS. As a result, the office of the Chief Rabbinate in Kiev was closed, the transmission of the "613" program on the national television terminated and even their Website disappeared.

Since the FJCU office is situated in Dnepropetrovsk and the local community has a stable financial backing, it performs de facto the coordinating function within the FJCU. The chief rabbi of Dnepropetrovsk Shmuel Kaminetsky had been regarded as a possible successor of rabbi Haykin in the capacity of the chief rabbi of Ukraine. However, at the October 2008 Fifth Congress of the UJCU, rabbi Kaminetsky featured as the "UJCU chief rabbi" (which is quite logical considering that the post of the UJCU new president was filled by one of the two major sponsors of the Dnepropetrovsk HaBaD community). It is worth mentioning that at the event rabbi Kaminetsky in the capacity of the "UJCU chief rabbi" sat at the same table with rabbi Asman designated as the "AUJC chief rabbi" and rabbi Bleich, the "chief rabbi of Ukraine". It is hard to say, as yet, what will the relations between UJCU, FJCU and the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish community be like and what role will be played by Kaminetsky. On the one hand, it is hard to imagine that the HaBaD

Federation will put up with rabbi Bleich continuing to officially be the chief rabbi of Ukraine. On the other hand, as far as is known, rabbi Kaminetsky, no matter how much they push him, is not eager, for a number of reasons, to be named “chief rabbi of Ukraine” (notably, because he doesn’t want to leave Dnepropetrovsk), while there is just no other rabbi who is respected and has a stable and independent of FJC CIS source of financing. And without stable financing, both the Chief Rabbinate related to the FJCU and the Federation itself are but an ephemeral and pro forma structure.

There is a possibility, of course, that should Igor Kolomoysky be elected the UJCU president, the Lubavich Hasids may try to carry out the scenario they successfully tested in some other post-Soviet countries: putting it crudely, to declare exclusively their own structures to be, by default, Jewish communities.

Incidentally, since the Federation includes a vast majority of religious communities in Ukraine, the UJCU-FJCU tandem has all the reasons to claim the status of the major community structure in the country (and within their logic, they are really such, since from the HaBaD point of view a secular Jewish community is nonsense, and if the FJCU includes most of the Ukrainian religious communities, it means that it is the FJCU who are the Jewish Community of Ukraine). Should there be enough money to gradually “promote” such a concept in the information space, then the “chief rabbi of UJCU” will, sort of, tacitly become the chief rabbi of Ukraine. Furthermore, the “Dnepropetrovsk guys” (rabbi Sh. Kaminetsky, I. Kolomoysky and G. Bogolubov) unlike V. Rabinovich, may decide to establish allied relations with the Vaad, the major secular association of communities (such negotiations were held, as far as we know, even before the October congress of the UJCU). The would-be election of I. Kolomoysky to the post of the UJCU President had been positively regarded by another Ukrainian Jewish leader – A. Feldman.

However, these are only mere speculations so far. Once more, it is still impossible to say anything definite about I. Kolomoysky’s plans and the real character and scale of the UJCU activities under his would-be leadership. Meanwhile, the FJCU continues to exist in the form of a weak association of strong communities without its “own” chief rabbi of Ukraine.

The UJROU, AUCJRC and FJCU all represent Orthodox Judaism. The adherents of progressive (also, reformist or modern) Judaism also have their own organization, the **Religious Association of Progressive Jewish Communities of Ukraine** (RAPJCU). The president of the RAPJCU is Alexander Zlotnik. The Association includes about fifty communities and in some cities they even have their synagogues; however, they suffer

an acute shortage of rabbis. The Ukrainian reformists support the Website <http://www.pjukr.kiev.ua/> Beginning with 2003, they've had their own chief rabbi Alex Dukhovny.

Such is a somewhat generalized picture of the “secular” and “religious” components of the Jewish community infrastructure. If studied in more detail, the picture will appear more complicated. In Kiev, Chernovtsy, Berdichev and some other cities, you will discover activities of the adherents of conservative Judaism. Skvirsky, Breslov, etc. Hasidism is represented in Ukraine by one or two communities quite active in their towns. Another peculiarity of Ukraine is that, in contrast to other post-Soviet republics, strong Jewish organizations exist not only in the capital of the country. Self-sufficient communities in Kharkov, Odessa, Donetsk, etc. function quite independently and are not subordinated to any “center”, and Dnepropetrovsk even claims, occasionally, not without reason, the status of the “Jewish capital” of the country.

### **Topical issues: “developmental disease” or structural crisis?**

The years of 2007 and 2008 are marked by a noticeable shift in the “balance of forces” in Ukraine. What is the shift like?

The realignment of the organizations and leaders has shed light on a number of trends.

Firstly, we witness the “second coming” of businessmen of Jewish-descent in the Jewish community life (the “first coming” was in 1997–1999, when with the financial and organizational participation of big businesses, such structures as AUJC, JCOU and JFU were formed). The ascendance of Dnepropetrovsk businessmen to the all-Ukraine status is the most evident but not the only manifestation of this phenomenon. Though nobody has an exact picture of the situation, it seems that a psychologically critical fifty-fifty threshold ratio between the home and foreign sources of funds has been passed: today, more than half of the community’s demands are satisfied by “Ukrainian” money. Besides, the businessmen no longer confine themselves to donating money and accepting “honorary” positions in the managements of the community structures: rather, they want to partake in the development of the programs and to attach substance to their positions. Leading the way in this respect are Kolomoysky and the JFU new president Oleg Grosman.

Secondly, it is evident that the Ukrainian Jewish organizations and their leaders want to play a more active part in the international structures, and are ready to do so. After the example of the Russian oligarchs joining the management of the European Jewish Congress and financing costly projects in Israel, the Ukrainian businessmen also seek recognition in Israel and in

the “Jewish street” in Europe and are ready to invest in it. It seems that in their gigantomania and extravagant spending, the Ukrainian sponsors of costly projects try to outdo their Russian colleagues. This tendency can be illustrated by the large-scale construction and restoration projects in the Old City of Jerusalem financed by Ukrainian entrepreneurs, by the most attended in the CIS history forum ‘Limmud’ in Yalta, by the European Council of Jewish Communities office opened in Kiev, or by an ambitious project of constructing a grand community center in Dnepropetrovsk. It is another matter that the rationale of these projects can be challenged. For instance, I don’t see what can be gained by taking part in the activities of the European Council of Jewish Communities (UCJC), that second-rate and rather pro forma association having no real advantage over the European Jewish Congress. It is highly questionable whether they will be able to use all the huge premises of the future community center in Dnepropetrovsk.

Meanwhile, it is evident that the generosity of the Ukrainian sponsors depended upon the 2004–2008 economic revival; with the advent of the global economic crisis, the situation might change. We would like to wish the leaders not to be carried away by new large-scale projects and, instead, focus their efforts on internal problems (to which we will promptly return) before all resources have been wasted on “gold menorahs”.

And lastly, the emergence of new “power houses” and the change of the entire balance of forces in the Jewish umbrella organizations in Ukraine over the past year, have inevitably triggered a new spiral of conflicts between the leaders whose relations have always been cool. In 2007 and 2008, the country witnessed already the third in the post-Soviet period spiral of “Jewish Wars” (the first one occurred in 1997 – 1999 and the second in 2002 – 2003) caused, as was the case before, by the ambitions of some leaders to “seize power” over the Jewish community in the country. Though lately the conflict is less frequently covered by mass media (and much less so by the non-Jewish press), it considerably hampers normal relations between different groups of Jewish leaders.

In contrast to the 2000–2001 “Jewish Wars” in Russia, the Ukrainian authorities don’t take sides and don’t interfere in the fight. The country’s political elite is conflict-torn and is unable to pursue any meaningful policy either in the Jewish “street” or in the ethnic sphere in general. It might be supposed that for today’s Ukraine’s President Viktor Yushchenko the “good guy” among the Jewish leaders is Josef Zisels. However, this is not only of no advantage to the latter (and to the Vaad of Ukraine), but not in the least does it facilitate lobbying the Jewish community’s interests before the executive powers.

To the Prime-Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, Alexander Feldman, a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada from the bloc named after Tymoshenko is certainly much closer, in the capacity of a Jewish leader. However, in this case there is no evidence either that the Cabinet used its administrative leverage to somehow promote strengthening his position in the capacity of the community leader. The residual state support is still being enjoyed, through inertia, by the Jewish Council of Ukraine headed by Ilia Levitas. As for Rabinovich, after the 2004 events he went over to the opposition (in times of Leonid Kuchma's presidency the AUJC's leader was loyal to the leadership of the country). He, together with other leaders who follow him (rabbi Bleich has joined them in recent years), repeatedly criticizes the authorities for pandering to anti-Semitism and nationalism, among other things, when dealing with historical issues.

The peak of criticism was reached in Autumn of 2007, when the President of Ukraine signed the decree on awarding (posthumously) the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) R. Shukhevich the title of Hero of Ukraine (in the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, still before the UIA had been organized, R. Shukhevich did serve in the German Armed Forces; however, nothing is known about his participation in war crimes). According to statements made by some Jewish leaders, the action was interpreted as a manifestation of state anti-Semitism and exculpation of a Nazi criminal. • An active publicity campaign, including foreign media, forced Ukrainian authorities to undertake some kind of measures.

The momentous event was the meeting of President of the state with the leaders of the Jewish organizations in autumn of 2007, which was attended by Y. Zisels, I. Levitas, V. Rabinovich and A. Feldman (the religious leaders had not been invited to the meeting). The meeting was dedicated, among other problems, to anti-Semitism. In Zisels' opinion, "the discussion was, to some extent, an attempt to take in the situation that had resulted from a number of publications in the Ukrainian and Russian media to the effect that, supposedly, there is a vigorous growth of anti-Semitism and Nazism taking place in our country". After the meeting, the President signed a number of

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• The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA) was a group of Ukrainian nationalist partisans originated in 1942 as the military wing of the Stepan Bandera's Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (the OUN). The UIA received certain support from the Germans. In 1941 through 1942, many soldiers and leaders of the UIA actively collaborated with the German occupants. This, alongside the active use of anti-Semitic ideas in the OUN propaganda during the first years of the war turned the UIA, in the eyes of a considerable part of Jews, into a symbol of Ukrainian collaborationism and participation of the Ukrainian population in the Holocaust (*editor's note*).

decrees (e.g., on handing over to the communities the Torah Scrolls that are kept in national archives) that in the current situation remain on paper since there is no sufficient legal basis to implement them (likewise, the solution to the problem of restitution of real estate has not gotten off the ground yet). However, some of Yushchenko's actions did reap tangible benefit: a short time after his intervention, the synagogue building in Chernovtsy was transferred to the Jewish community.

To state it more simply, on the one hand, the state authorities have been lately taking interest in the life of Jewish communities but are unable to handle their pressing problems effectively (the same can be said about an array of other problems, though); on the other hand, the very fact that the authorities don't single out "courtier Jews" among the Jewish leaders and don't interfere in their internal affairs deserves appreciation. The disunity of the organizations called upon to represent the interests of the Ukrainian Jewry before the authorities remains, first and foremost, the problem of the Jewish community itself.

However, this fragmentation has its advantages: the communities are completely independent in political and financial issues. The disadvantages are more severe, and the lack of common approaches to such issues as restitution or fight against anti-Semitism are not the worst of them. The absence of strategic planning that would involve the concentration not only of resources but also of intellectual and managerial efforts hampers the solution of a number of urgent problems such as the mobilization of resources for charitable programs (in the near future the Claims Conference will cease sponsoring Heseds, the AJJDC is gradually winding down its activities in this sphere, while the Jewish population is getting older), offering a high quality Jewish education or creating nation-wide Jewish mass media, both printed and electronic. To attain it, we need not only a concentration of efforts but also a strategic vision which, unfortunately, not every community leader possesses.

Nevertheless, the disunity, as such, of the Jewish community is not a top-priority problem. Surely, the absence of a single umbrella organization equally respected by the community and the State, that would represent the interests of the Ukrainian Jewry both home and abroad, as well as the absence of a spiritual leader accepted by all religious Jews – all this creates certain problems. What is worse is that it is not just the absence of a single "representative body", but the presence, instead, of rivalry developing into unpleasant infighting. In the late 1990s, the situation was marked by a rather heated rivalry between the major Jewish organizations, and, in 2002

through 2003, it was aggravated even more by the discord over the possibility of constructing a community center in Babiy Yar. Formal reconciliation between the main conflicting parties was reached in the autumn of 2003, thanks to the efforts of the EAJC leaders. Although, in 2007 the truce was violated once again, it doesn't seem that "Jewish Wars" bother even those directly involved, let alone the membership of the community. In my opinion, despite the media appeal of the issue, organizational disunity creates no real problems. True, we do have several chief rabbis, so what? The situation in the Jewish religious community has nothing in common with the schism in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The chief rabbi is not a patriarch. Judaism doesn't know a "church" as a consecrated legitimate "hierarchy" beyond which salvation is impossible. For rabbis and the communities they lead it is altogether unnecessary to belong to any centralized structures. The same is true for secular organizations: if some leader wants to be called chairman of all-Ukraine Jewish organization and wishes to be involved only in gathering information about Jews who were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, while another leader prefers to fight against anti-Semitism – then why should they be in the same association? The real problem, as I see it, is different. The trouble with the Ukrainian Jewish communities (and, incidentally, with all other post-Soviet ones) is that they can not be called community organizations: if for no other reason than because we have no community as such. Surely, there is no generally accepted definition of the term "community" and my understanding of the situation may be challenged; however, I will take the liberty of explicating the thought proceeding from an example. How does, in essence, a Jewish community work in a "normal" country, say in the USA or France? To satisfy their religious requirements, let the reader forgive me for the Soviet-style bureaucratise, religious Jews of the town of N will invite a rabbi to their synagogue. If the community is big and rich, they can afford to invite a renowned for his scholarship religious authority; otherwise, they will have to content themselves with a young yeshiva graduate (a post-high school religious institution). The community will sign a contract with the rabbi for, say, a year's term and will pay him from the budget formed from the contributions of the community members. In a year, the contract will either be extended or the community will look for another rabbi. When there appears a need in fundraising on a national level (e.g., to help Israel in the course of another escalation of the Middle East conflict) or, alternatively, when the community is seeking help for, say, building a new synagogue, then the community "remembers" that it is a member of such and such "federation" (usually, of a regional one) and handles these issues through

that federation. Regional and national federations of communities are built from the grass-roots level; their governing bodies are elected as a result of campaign trails (with discussions on nominee's political programs, etc.). The most interested members of the community subscribe (with their own money) to some national Jewish newspaper. The most orthodox (and well-to-do) members of the community eat in kosher restaurants and send their kids to religious schools, also with their own money. While one-off donations from philanthropists help such a community to build a synagogue or a school or to send schoolchildren on a tour to Israel, on the whole, the community infrastructure exists at the expense of its members and the community strives to satisfy their needs.

So what is our situation like? With a small middleclass ready to pay for their religious (and ethnocultural) requirements, the financing of the community activities comes from two sources: from foreign organizations and from big domestic businessmen (let us assume as a first approximation that their shares are equal). Actually, it doesn't really matter whether the source of sponsor donations is domestic or foreign: in either case the relations we have are not community-like but are "benefactor-beneficiary" relations. And there are many examples of that.

The foreign foundations, as I have mentioned above, instead of lending support to local communities, name their branches "communities". All in all, life in these structures is in full swing and everybody is happy: pensioners get their medicine and grocery sets (it should be remembered that most of the Ukrainian Jews are elderly people) and young people learn English and attend dancing-parties. But the trouble is that all this is not community life in the sense of the aforementioned model. However, people from the sponsor organizations will disagree with me because they regard their activities as very important.

In the regions, branches of foundations and charitable organizations are headed not by local leaders or proponents of Jewish revival but by loyal (if not servile) to foreign directors managers who hold on to their fairly good (especially, for the province) wages and strive to please their bosses rather than the community. What comes out of it was convincingly demonstrated by the notorious affair with the failed, thank God, construction of a community center (with a cafeteria and a fitness house) in Babiy Yar, which had been initiated by the AJJDC.

In our circumstances, a grassroots religious community in a small town can be built only when a rich regional federation sends a rabbi there who (forgive me for the seemingly exaggerated, but alas! – a very realistic

example) via free-of-charge meals gathers poor pensioners for a minyan (the quorum of ten Jewish men required for a public prayer). Of course, there are different rabbis, and around a truly concerned delegate from, say, the above mentioned HaBaD there will gradually form a circle of local sponsors and young people thirsty for religious knowledge. In any case, a contract with the rabbi and a fair election of the community's chairman are out of the question in our situation.

It is a strange feature of the Ukrainian-style Jewish revival: a full- swing community-like life without a community. Another indicative example is mass media. Jewish newspapers and magazines (incidentally, of very poor quality) are full of cheerful reports of events organized by the sponsors of these events and periodicals and of reprints from the Israeli, Russian, the USA and German Russian-language Jewish papers and Websites. That is about all you find in these Ukrainian Jewish publications, except, perhaps, for religious periodicals where they tell about the religious holidays of the current month and the chapter of the Torah read that week in the synagogue. They don't discuss any serious intracommunity problems in the Jewish press, which is not surprising: there is no independent Jewish press since all the existing periodicals are sponsored and published by the same organizations and are circulated free-of-charge among "their own" communities. There is good reason for this: it is doubtful that a person interested in Jewish issues would subscribe, for his/her own money, to a digest of Israeli Russian-language news Websites.

In summary, putting it straightforwardly, this is what my conclusion boils down to: twenty years of revival have resulted in, on the one hand, a lot of Jewish organizations carrying out dashing (and, by all means, useful) activities aimed at arranging ethnic-cultural leisure activities for Jews (perhaps, more specifically, for Ukrainians of Jewish descent) and Jewish leaders speaking on behalf of Jews; on the other hand, Jews themselves who didn't elect those leaders and who enter "benefactor-beneficiary" relations with those organizations (if it is important for them to be aware of their "Jewishness" and they want to take part in the imitation of community life, without fully realizing, of course, that it is imitation), or who are not at all concerned about these issues (or even have no idea that there are so many Jewish organizations).

Needless to say, the aforementioned concerns not only Ukraine but all other post-Soviet countries.

What can we suggest in the situation that developed besides giving smart advice "to get rich" (i.e., to create a large and solvent middle class which would be able to finance its own needs)?

In some Eastern European countries, we see examples of self-financing communities fully satisfying their demands after the entire (or even partial) restitution of the previously nationalized community property had been put into effect by the State. Having ceased being dependent on foreign sponsors and our own new rich, leaders and activists now have more than sufficient funds for developing sound community infrastructure. Even in Ukraine, this course of action is not as utopian as may appear, and for the economy of the state it will, eventually, be beneficial. The experience of the abovementioned post-Soviet Eastern European countries shows that there is a direct correlation between the volume of foreign investments and the restitution of Jewish community property confiscated under the Communist power (or lost under the Nazi power), since restitution reflects the determination of the authorities to guarantee the inviolability of property and willingness to observe norms generally accepted among civilized nations.

Restitution may become the first step in making the structure of the Jewish community in Ukraine effective. Naturally, restitution alone will not solve all the problems that the community faces today. What is required today is that the leaders should carry out a profound analysis of the situation at hand and develop a strategy aimed at improving the prevailing structure of community relations in Ukraine.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF BELARUS IN THE YEAR 5767

*Dmitry Shevelev  
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According to census data, 27,810 people identified themselves as Jewish in 1999, comprising about 0.3 percent of the population<sup>1</sup>. There is no data on the ethnic composition of the republic of Belarus; however, the Jewish organizations claim that there are 70,000<sup>2</sup> people eligible under the Law of Return, although we find this number rather exaggerated.

There are three communal unions in Belarus – the Union of Belarusian Jewish Associations and Communities (UBJAC), the Judaic Religious Union in the Republic of Belarus (IRO), and the Union of Religious Jewish Congregations (URJC).

The UBJAC was founded by nine Belarusian Jewish organizations in 1991; it unites both secular citizens and Reform Judaism members. For many years now, the Union's chairman has been Leonid Mendelevich Levin – a man who enjoys the confidence both of the community and the authorities<sup>3</sup>.

The UBJAC comprises local Jewish communities and organizations, including the Belarusian Association of Concentration Camps and Ghetto Survivors; the Minsk Charitable Union of Concentration Camps and Ghetto Survivors "Hilf"; the Belarusian Jewish Union of War Veterans; the Emunah Jewish Cultural Society; the Jewish Charitable Foundation Chesed-Rachamim; the Republican Holocaust Foundation; the Maccabi Sports Organization; etc. These were joined in March 2007 by the Public Charitable Jewish Women's Organization "Keshet"<sup>4</sup>.

The 8th UBJAC Convention took place in Pinsk on July 15, 2007 (the previous one was held in 2004 in Gorodey, Nesvizh district of the Minsk oblast).

Reading the resolution of the convention, one can understand the main problems the Union has encountered over the last three years. At this stage,

the community's leadership prioritizes "work on improving the dialogue with the ethnic and religious structures of the republic" (paragraph 7), actively working on "reviving national culture" (p. 9), and taking measures "to strengthen the material base of the Aviv newspaper and the Jewish History and Culture Museum of Belarus (p. 11).

The convention noted that the UBJAC's activity is "negatively influenced by a lack of organizational unity with the religious structures." The Union's leaders decided to "consider inexpedient the existence of parallel organizations, created on the basis of the common electorate (sic! – Author) and declaring common goals and tasks" (p. 15), meaning either the activities of the IRO and the URJC, or an attempt to create some new organization to unite the secular and religious communities.

It was decided that the immediate tasks for the Jewish community were "preparing events to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the destruction of the Minsk ghetto" and "impart republican-wide meaning to the events" (p. 12)<sup>5</sup>.

The religious Jewish congregations of Belarus are united in three organizations: the Litvak ones – in the Judaic Religious Union (IRO), the Chabad ones – in the Union of Religious Jewish Congregations (URJC), and the Reform ones – in the Association of Progressive Judaism.

According to 2002 data, the IRO, headed by Yury Dorn who was a member of the Jewish renaissance movement of the 1980s, comprised 19 orthodox communities and organizations<sup>6</sup>. The IRO has a charitable mission called Judaism Revival (similar to the Chesed) and a yeshiva – Gdola de Minsk (opened in 2000).

The Chabad communities (14 counted in 2007<sup>7</sup>) constitute the Union of Religious Jewish Congregations, headed by Vladimir (Sholom) Malinkin. Little is known about the URJC's activities, and the Chabad itself has not been very active. L. Levayev's Or Avner Foundation is currently continuing the restoration of the synagogue in Kropotkin Street, which is to be managed by the URJC in the future<sup>8</sup>.

The Association of Progressive Judaism is led by Rabbi Grigory Abramovitch and unites 13 communities<sup>9</sup>.

Official sources quote different numbers of Jewish religious communities – 43<sup>10</sup> and 24<sup>11</sup>. This is probably because the first case includes all really existing communities, while the second – only counts officially registered ones.

The UBJAC, the IRO, and the URJC each publish a newspaper, respectively, Aviv (Spring), Berega (Shores), and Beyakhad (Together, since 2007).

Aviv is obviously experiencing shortages in financial resources – during the period in question it was published irregularly, with different numbers of pages, and consolidated issues for two or three months<sup>12</sup>. Berega is published on a monthly basis and distributed by subscription. The “Belarusian Jewish bulletin” *My Yashche Tut! (We Are Still Here!)* is continuing to be self-published; it is also distributed over the Internet at the webpage of the Belarusian expat community at <http://www.souz.co.il>. The bulletin contains mainly a review of the community’s cultural life over a given period, as well as criticism of the official structures of communal self-government.

Provincial communities also have unregistered periodicals.

The IRO holds annual conferences. The heads of the religious communities of Minsk (Rabbi Avraam Beyninson), Vitebsk (Rabbi Chaim Taub), and Bobruisk (Rabbi Israel Taub) were presented at the 14th conference (December 10, 2006). The report on this event, published in the Berega newspaper, shows that the IRO’s leaders currently see their main goal in attracting youth to Jewish religious life and creating a framework for the yeshiva to function<sup>13</sup>.

It is notable that a lack of interest in Jewish life among the young people is one of the pressing problems recently encountered by Jewish leaders. Both the secular and the religious leaders of the community consider work with the young generation a priority. This was noted at the 8th UBJAC convention and at the IRO conference. However, notably the youth has not been represented on the board, elected at the 8th convention.

The Minsk Jewish student organization *Beyt Hillel* and the *Netzer* organization which unites followers of Progressive Judaism are both youth-oriented. *Beyt Hillel* activists estimate the number of young people attending their gatherings at 140<sup>14</sup>, but this figure seems somewhat exaggerated.

The only Jewish mass youth organization reaching beyond Minsk is the *Netzer*, but there is unfortunately no precise data on their quantitative composition. In 2007, the Zionist youth movement *Ha-Shomer Ha-Tzair* was recreated by the Jewish Agency. However, at the moment this organization can hardly be taken seriously.

The Jewish community of Belarus is supported by the American Joint Distribution Committee. The Belarusian office of this organization received a new leader in the fall of 2006, Yoni Leyfer. The way the policy of the Joint with regard to the community has changed because of this replacement and the results that led to are as yet difficult to establish.

One of the main goals the community leaders set for their self-government institutions is to perpetuate the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Thus,

in his speech at the mourning ceremony in honor of the 63rd anniversary of the liquidation of the Minsk ghetto on October 22, 2006, L. M. Levin stated that there were over 300 unmarked sites of Jewish massacres remaining in Belarus, and that it was the Union's task "to have all of them perpetuated"<sup>15</sup>.

The UBJAC has a committee on perpetuating the memory of the victims of the Holocaust in Belarus. October 2006 saw memorial signs erected by the Voronino village in the Bykhovo district of Mogilev oblast, in Bykhov itself, and by Zaslavl<sup>16</sup>; in July 2007 memorials were placed in the Babinichi village in Polotzk district, in Mstizh village in Borisov district, in Yezerishche village in Gorodok district<sup>17</sup>, and in Slutzk<sup>18</sup>. In most cases it was a stone with an inscription. The creation and placement of memorial signs was funded by the British Simon Mark Lazarus Foundation.

Certain places of Jewish deaths in the years of German Nazi occupation receive memorial signs with no help by communal institutions. In October 2007 the Berega reported that a memorial was placed in the Slobodka village in Braslav district in memory of the 40 Jewish families that lived there before the war. The memorial was financed by the family of Israeli citizen Guy Elitzur who had visited Belarus in 2005<sup>19</sup>.

Vladimir Sverdlov, the only survivor of a 1942 massacre in the Krynki village of the Osipovichi district where 82 Jewish children were shot, built a memorial there with his own money on October 27, 2006<sup>20</sup>.

The UBJAC has a Jewish History and Culture Museum (director – I. P. Gerasimova), which is located in the Minsk community house and funded by the Joint. The museum carries out significant prospecting, research, and educational work, preserving documents and materials transferred from private collections. According to its leader, the museum has a document fund of 10,000 units of issue<sup>21</sup>. During the period in question, the entire work was carried out by two employees – I. Gerasimova and V. Rusakova, helped by several volunteers.

In September 2006, the collection of the museum was enriched with fifteen Torah scrolls found in a house in the environs of Minsk. The scrolls had presumably vanished from the Smilovichi settlement in 1941. This event became very famous in the state<sup>22</sup>. Over five years (since 2002) the employees and volunteers of the museum have prepared more than ten exhibitions which were shown outside Belarus as well as inside it. The activities of the museum and its leader are well-known in Russia, Israel, and other countries, contributing greatly to the authority of the Jewish community of Belarus<sup>23</sup>. Despite that, the museum's financial troubles became more urgent in the late 2007. Some groups even suggested it be closed. I. P. Gerasimova suggested

that the museum be given over to the state. The issue is as yet unsolved. Obviously, closing the museum would be a serious error of judgment on the part of the community leaders and the Joint office. At the same time, the state would only benefit from such an acquisition.

April 2007 saw the First School for Israel Studies, organized near Minsk by V. Ruskova and the author of the publication<sup>24</sup>. In July and August the Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization “Sefer” held a Belarusian School on Wheels – an expedition through the cities and shtetls of the former Pale of Settlement. In August and September that same year the Jewish Agency and the Hillel together with the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies organized a student expedition whose main task was to preserve and document Jewish cemeteries. All three schools showed that Belarusian students take an interest in Jewish Studies, even those studying subjects unrelated to Jewish research.

After the Marc Chagall International Institute for Humanities was closed in 2004, the only remaining institution to offer instruction in Jewish Studies is the Culturology sub-department of the Department of International Relations of Belarusian State University (former International Institute for Humanities, reorganized in 2004), where the Jewish Studies department of the abrogated institution was transferred. The department prepares specialists in the field of culturology and teaching culturology subjects<sup>25</sup>, but feedback offered by current and former students and observations made by the author of this review suggest that the curriculum, as well as, to a certain extent, the teaching staff of the department, needs to be revised.

The UBJAC hosts the Izya Kharik<sup>26</sup> Minsk Public Association of Jewish Culture (MOEK). In March 2007 it was announced that the Yiddish group formerly led by the famous Jewish poet Hirsch Reles<sup>27</sup>, would be restored. In the spring of 2007 it was decided that a youth section was to be opened at the MOEK.

An important event in the cultural life was when the article collection Jewish Traditional Music in Eastern Europe was published. Unfortunately, Belarusian Jewish music suffered a great loss on June 16, 2007, with the untimely demise of Nina Samuilovna Stepanskaya – a renowned musicologist, researcher of Jewish music, and brilliant teacher.

Several negative events happened in the period in question.

On March 10, 2007, a memorial plaque disappeared off the wall of house №13, Romanovskaya Sloboda Street in Minsk. The plaque had been attached in memory of the Bremen Jews who had died in the Minsk ghetto<sup>28</sup>. The German embassy in Belarus promised a reward for aid in finding the

plaque, and on April 12, 2007 it was passed to the German diplomatic mission<sup>29</sup>.

On the night of November 12, 2006, a swastika and “Bey zhidov!” (Kill the Jews) appeared on the building of the Israeli cultural and informational center in Uralskaya Street in Minsk; “neo-Nazi symbols” were inscribed on the “Yama” (Pit) memorial; and “anti-Semitic leaflets with threats” were distributed (I quote the Berega, №1, 2007. – *D. S.*). The UBJAC Council and the UJRC leaders came out with a common appeal wherein they associated these actions with the anniversary of the Kristallnacht (November 9–10, 1938)<sup>30</sup>. On November 15, 2006, a criminal case was initiated concerning this event under article 341 of the Criminal Code of Belarus – defiling buildings and damaging property. The culprits were not found, and the investigation was abandoned in March 2007<sup>31</sup>.

Another act punishable under article 341 of the Criminal Code of Belarus was purported in November 2006 – neo-Nazi graffiti appeared on the fence of the Minsk House of Charity.

The UBJAC held a round table discussion with representatives of ethnic and confessional organizations – the archpriest of the Minsk eparchy of the Belarus Orthodox Church Fyodor Pavny, the priest of the St. Simon and St. Elena church V. Zavalnyuk, the chairman of the Tatar community Zikr ul-Kitab Abu-Bekir Shabanovich, and others. It was decided that a joint committee to combat neo-Fascism and extremism was to be founded<sup>32</sup>. This reviewer holds no information on any actions on the part of the committee, however, its establishment proved the ability and the need of various communities to cooperate in order to solve certain issues.

During the period in question, there were no acute conflicts between the three organizations (UBJAC, IRO, UJRC) representing the Jewish community before the state. Two factors were conducive to the UBJAC’s importance and influence on the society and state structures: the personal authority of the UBJAC’s leader L. M. Levin, and the activities of the Jewish museum.

The authorities did not intervene in the work of Jewish organizations: the state did not seem to favor any one organizational structure of the Jewish community over the others. The events that followed, though (on October 26, 2007 President of Belarus A. G. Lukashenko met with the leader of the UJRC V. Malinkin, and on November 27 of the same year – with L. Levayev) showed that the government is leaning towards supporting the Chabad. Possibly, the government of Belarus is following the example of the Russian authorities which support the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia (FJC). However, it is most likely that the Belarusian political elite is simply

interested in the investments of the concern owned by L. Levayev, who might have requested support for the UJRC in return for investing into the Belarusian economy.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Национальный состав населения республики Беларусь / Перепись населения 1999 года (основные итоги) // Интернет-сайт Министерства статистики Республики Беларусь (<http://belstat.gov.by/homep/ru/perepic/p5.php>).

<sup>2</sup> See for example the data of the European Jewish Fund at their website ([http://www.europeanjewishfund.org/index.php?member\\_communities/ru\\_index/belarus\\_ru/](http://www.europeanjewishfund.org/index.php?member_communities/ru_index/belarus_ru/)).

<sup>3</sup> L. M. Levin (1936) – Honored Architect of the BSSR (1988), co-authored many architectural projects in the BSSR and the USSR, including such memorial complexes as Khatyn, Proryv (Breakthrough) in the Ushatzki district (1974), Proklyatiye Fashizmu (Curse on Fascism) in the Dokshitzki district (1983), Katyusha in Orsha (1966) (the three latter ones are in the Vitebsk oblast), as well as memorials to Bukharian troops in Bukhara (1975), the complex Soldatskoeye Pole (Soldiers' Field) in Volgograd (1976–1980) // *Беларуская энцыклапедыя ў 18 тамах*: Т. 9. Мінск, 1999. Р. 179.

<sup>4</sup> «Преобразуем мир энергией и делами женщин!», 25 июня 2007 г. (<http://www.beljews.org/news-11.html>).

<sup>5</sup> Постановление VIII съезда СБЕОО // Авив. 2007. Июль–август. №5–6. С. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Лазарь Л.* Мы два берега у одной реки: [Interview with Y. M. Dorn, head of the Judaic Religious Union in the Republic of Belarus] ([http://www.souz.co.il/clubs/read.html?article=2282&Club\\_ID=1](http://www.souz.co.il/clubs/read.html?article=2282&Club_ID=1))

<sup>7</sup> *Чарный С.* Как живут евреи Белоруссии // Агентство еврейских новостей, 10 мая 2007 г. ([http://aen.ru/index.php?page=article&article\\_id=1150&category=tradition](http://aen.ru/index.php?page=article&article_id=1150&category=tradition))

<sup>8</sup> See: Авив. 2007. Декабрь. №10-11. С. 9.

<sup>9</sup> According to the website of the Progressive Judaism Movement in the CIS (<http://www.reform.org.ru/?area=bel>)

<sup>10</sup> Выступление посла В. Гайсенка, главы делегации Республики Беларусь на конференции ОБСЕ по антисемитизму (Берлин, 28–29 апреля 2004 года) ([http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2004/04/2817\\_ru.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2004/04/2817_ru.pdf))

<sup>11</sup> Религиозные конфессии на территории Беларуси // Официальный Интернет-портал Президента Республики Беларусь (<http://www.president.gov.by/press23736.html>)

<sup>12</sup> Руководство общины признает финансовые трудности газеты «Авив». See: Постановление VIII съезда Союза белорусских еврейских объединений и общин // Авив. 2007. Июль – август. №5–6. С. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Берега. 2006. Декабрь. №12. С. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Минская еврейская студенческая организация «Бейт-Гилель» // Сайт Минского еврейского общинного дома (<http://www.meod.by/ru/organizations/hillel/e87c7be7d3955000.html>).

<sup>15</sup> Галовы сьхілім Над жажлівай Ямай. Яна нямая, бо ня мае дна (<http://www.meod.by/print/ru/news/f0cca01852c5e438.html>).

<sup>16</sup> Авив. 2006. Сентябрь – октябрь. №8–9. С. 3

<sup>17</sup> Берега. 2007. Август. №8. С. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Берега. 2007. Сентябрь. №9. С. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Берега. 2007. Октябрь. №10. С. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Авив. 2006. Сентябрь – октябрь. №8–9. С. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Зубарев Я.* Мечта, воплощенная в жизнь: К пятилетию Музея истории и культуры евреев Беларуси: [Interview with I. P. Gerasimova]: [Reprinted from *Novosti Nedeli*] // «Авив». 2007. Июль – август. №5–6. С. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Авив. 2006. Сентябрь – октябрь. №8–9. С. 6; Берега. 2006. Октябрь. №10. С. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Музей истории и культуры евреев Беларуси (<http://www.meod.by/ru/organizations/museum/>).

<sup>24</sup> Первая в Белоруссии // АЕН (<http://education.aen.ru/story-id=466>), Первая в Беларуси Школа по израилеведению // «Беларускі партызан» (<http://www.belaruspartisan.org/bp-forte/?page=102&news=12227>).

<sup>25</sup> See the websites of the Belarus State University <http://www.bsu.by> and the International Relations Department <http://www.fir.bsu.by>

<sup>26</sup> Kharik Izya (Isaac Davidovich, 1896 or 1898 – 1937) – Jewish poet, editor of the *Shtern* magazine (Minsk) in 1928–1927, member of the BSSR Central Election Committee since 1931, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus since 1936, was repressed; posthumously rehabilitated in 1956. Selected works: in Yiddish – М., 1958, translated into Russian: «Стихи и поэмы» (М., 1958), «От полюса к полюсу» (М., 1971). См.: Беларускія пісьменнікі: Біябібліяграфічны слоўнік у 6 тамах: Т. 6. Мн., 1995. С. 174–177.

<sup>27</sup> Reles Hirsch (Grigory Lvovich, 1913–2004) – Jewish poet, wrote in Yiddish and Russian, his works were published at different times by the newspapers: *Einikayt* (Moscow), *Folksshtime* (Warsaw), *Sovietisch Heimland* magazine. Collections of Yiddish verse were published in Minsk in 1939 and 1941. Several years before his death, H. Reles published a memoir in Yiddish, translated into Russian after his death. For short biographic information and a detailed bibliography, see: Беларускія пісьменнікі: Біябібліяграфічны слоўнік у 6 тамах: Т. 5. Мн., 1995. С. 196–198.

<sup>28</sup> Исчезла памятная доска // Сообщения на сайте СБЕОО от 20 марта 2007 г. (<http://www.beljews.org/news-3.html>).

<sup>29</sup> Авив. 2007. Май – июнь. №3–4. С. 17.

<sup>30</sup> Published: Авив. 2007. Январь – февраль. №1–2. С. 1.

<sup>31</sup> КРЫМІНАЛЬНУЮ СПРАВУ ЗАКРЫВАЮЦЬ // «Мы яшчэ тут!». Красавік 2007 / Адар 5767. Вып.26. ([http://www.souz.co.il/clubs/read.html?article=3260&Club\\_ID=1](http://www.souz.co.il/clubs/read.html?article=3260&Club_ID=1))

<sup>32</sup> Авив. 2007. Январь–февраль. №1–2. С. 1.

# COMMUNITY CLOSE UP

## THE BIROBIDZHAN JUDAIC COMMUNITY

*Iosif Brener  
(Birobidzhan)*

Over the door of the old Birobidzhan  
synagogue there was a sign carved in wood:  
“OPEN TO ME THE GATES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,  
THAT I MAY ENTER THROUGH THEM AND GIVE  
THANKS TO THE LORD. THIS IS THE GATE OF THE LORD;  
THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL ENTER THROUGH IT.”  
(The Book of Psalms Tehilim, 118:19)

*In this article, we used the following sources: studies by Cand. Sc. (History) E. S. Genina, Ph.D. (History) G. V. Kostyrchenko, Y. Levavi (Babitsky), Ph.D (History) V. V. Romanova and D. I. Vayserman; documents from the JAO (Jewish Autonomous Oblast) State Archives; recollections of relatives of the former congregants of the synagogue. The article features excerpts in Russian translated from Hebrew and Yiddish books published abroad. It is for the first time that a classification of the synagogue books and the ritual articles that remained after the 1956 fire, in which the old synagogue burned down, is presented. The classification was compiled with the assistance of rabbi Mordechai Scheiner and Head of the “Beit T’shuva” community D. Kofman.*

The history of the Birobidzhan community slowly raises the curtain over its once dynamic activity. Despite the sad end of its short existence, there appears more and more information about the events of past years. At the small synagogue Museum of Judaism, rabbi Mordechai Scheiner together with rabanit Esther and the synagogue congregants, compiled a unique collection of ritual articles, documents, photographs and the Birobidzhan residents’ recollections, which entered in the Memory Book, about the settlers who arrived at the station Tikhonkaya beginning from 1928.

Thousands of Jews arrived in Birobidzhan in the first years of settlement. They came from different republics of the USSR, as well as from 14 foreign countries where religious culture was inherent in the life of cities and Jewish settlements. The State Land Preservation Act had given the Jews-settlers hope and a chance to obtain land, work and happiness. They came from the starving settlements of Ukraine, Belorussia and Moldavia where there was no work and only famine reigned. Besides, in the second half of the 20s, anti-Semitic riots had taken place in those republics. The spoken recollections of the 94-years-old Shifra Yakovleva, maiden name Borek, with whom I met in 2007 in Rishon Letsion (Israel), confirm the facts of anti-Semitic persecution and victimization.<sup>1</sup> “The fact that the state’s campaign against anti-Semitism gradually turned into repressions against the Jews was not accepted by the Stalin-created administration as an absurd paradox, but rather as a peculiar kind of life dialectic, since in the top echelons of power there was a growing feeling that Judaeophobia was aroused not so much by the chauvinism of the masses but by the activity of the Jewish community proper”.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the 20s, the wave of anti-Semitism reached the Far East of Russia. In 1929, anti-Semitic riots were suppressed in Khabarovsk, Blagoveshchensk and Chita. But at the same time, within the framework of the anti-religious campaign, the authorities repressed any signs of Jewish religious activity. V. V. Romanova writes in her Ph.D. thesis: “Among other forms of the Krai authorities’ activity with regard to the “Jewish policy”, we must mention the closing down of the still surviving by the end of the 1920s synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. It was then that the Vladivostok synagogue was turned into a workers’ club, while the Khabarovsk synagogue became a “proletarian museum”. “At the request of the toiling masses” the synagogues in the Chita oblast were closed down. On the pretext of being against the “interests of the country’s military defense” the Chita Jewish cemetery was closed down (it turned out to be in close proximity to an artillery supply depot).<sup>3</sup>

Against the background of these events, the resettlement of Jews to the Far East “from the densely populated European part of the USSR, with its historically formed hotbeds of Judaeophobia, to the practically uninhabited territory, helped to minimize the spread of the social disease”<sup>4</sup>. This was but one of the grounds, by no means unimportant, for the political expedience of the decree of the USSR CPC (Council of People’s Commissars) of March 28, 1928, about the securing of 4.5 mln hectares of the Amur River region land in the Far East for the resettlement of Jews.

Apart from the scanty belongings including household goods and instruments, a certain part of the Jews arriving at the station Tikhonkaya,

had brought along ritual articles: prayer-books, prayer shawls, tefillins, etc. The distribution of settlers to communities was, mainly, carried out in accordance with one's occupation. The OZET (Society for Settling Toiling Jews on the Land) centers for enrolling settlers sometimes assembled whole crews and brigades assorting teams ready to work. It is clear that at that point no questions of religious worship were taken into consideration. But as is seen from books published later, in the first years of resettlement to the Birobidzhan region, religious culture was present in the lives of Jews from the very first days of their stay in the new place.

The book "Jews in the Taiga" by V. Fink may be referred to as one of the first publications on this topic. In the story "Yom Kippur", he describes his trip, in the summer of 1928, on the eve of the Day of Atonement, from the station Tikhonkaya to the Jewish settlement Waldheim (this is how Fink called the village Valdgeim. – *I.B.*). It was already dark when the narrator reached the settlement and all the praying was supposed to have been over. He was taken into a house where there were nine people sitting in the corners. At the sight of the incomer, there were exclamations heard: "There! We have a *minyán* now!" ...Apparently, I turned out to be the tenth man whose presence was necessary to attach due respectability to the prayer... The Jews quickly rose to their feet, faced the East and picked up their *tallises*. They put the shawls over their heads murmuring the words of cabbalistic incantations: "I am ready to wrap my body in tzitzit, so may my soul, my two hundred forty-eight organs and my three hundred sixty-five sinews be wrapped in the illumination of tzitzit which has the numerical value of six hundred thirteen".

The tallises of the Jews looked old, torn and patched. Who knows? – they may have seen pogroms, these striped shawls, that had been around for thousands of years and had even reached the taiga.

The Jews arrived at Waldheim in spring. They came up to the roaring taiga and scalded it with the hot breath of people who were eager to live and toil. They had covered tens of thousands kilometers, they came from starving settlements, from beyond the former Pale, which remained the boundary of their poverty; they had overcome the traditions of generations, great distances and the taiga; they built a settlement for themselves where they lived, uprooted old stumps and tilled the land. Hear this, O, Israel! And other than Israel, also hear, hear well!"<sup>5</sup>

The most serious study of the resettlement to Birobidzhan was done by Y. Levavi (Babitsky) in his work "The Jewish Settlement to Birobidzhan", written in Hebrew and hardly familiar to the Russian reader. In the chapter

“The Significance of Jewish Religion and Yiddish in Birobidzhan”, in the part “Jewish Religion”, he tells about a striking and, probably, unique fact of a synagogue having been built in a dugout (translation from Hebrew by rabbi Mordechai Scheiner):

“In the beginning, among the Jews settlers there were those who felt the need for praying. Extremely interesting is the report of the Communist writer Otto Heller who visited Birobidzhan in 1930: “Several hundred meters from the Experimental station (Birofeld) one can see an unusual, man-built mount completely covered with grass. Inside, the mount was domed – it was not easy to enter – and it was built in 1928 by the first settlers so that they could pray in it. In those days, the settlers still remembered their old traditions. In fact, the first thing they built was this synagogue. This prayer hall must have been quite unique in the world. But now it stands empty, with nobody praying there during the holidays.”<sup>6</sup>

I. Babitsky mentions some more instances of religious activity in some cities and towns, and also speaks about the anti-religious propaganda carried out by the authorities. “The Struggle against Religion” – this was the title of a short essay from the book “Birobidzhan at Close Sight” written by Esther Rosenthal-Schneiderman. Schmul-Jacob Levin, a settler from Riga, bakes matza for the settlement of Birakan. The authorities begin a fierce fight against him. They don’t sell him any flour for baking matza under the pretext that flour is needed for baking bread, and they tell him he’d better get all those silly ideas out of his head. The fact attains publicity in mass media. In the end, it is decided to hold an open trial to reveal the true face of the enemy.<sup>7</sup>

The mass media of the 30s carried out a focused campaign against “religious remnants”. On April 17, 1935, on the eve of Pesah, the newspaper “Birobidzhaner Shtern” published an editorial with an appeal to fight against “religious counter-revolution” and to go out to work, during Pesah, with self-devotion and energy, so as to meet May Day with high-powered Socialistic work. Several days later, the same newspaper published an article about Jewesses in Valdgeim who baked matza, made their dishes kosher and did not go out to work during the Holiday.

In the Oblast regional centers and collective farms, *minyans* – groups of practicing Jews – got together to observe religious ceremonies. They were held in the settlements of Birofeld, Valdgeim, Leninskoye and some others. Unofficially, Judaic communities were functioning in Birobidzhan beginning with the year of 1934.<sup>8</sup>

These facts are, virtually, the first mention of how Jewish religious ceremonies were held at the beginning of the Jewish settlement in the

Birobidzhan region. There is no doubt that they did, actually, take place, though, in those days, religion was mentioned only in negative terms, and the state used punitive measures to nip any signs of religious activity.

During the 1936-1938 repressions, more than 7500 people who constituted the local elite – party and industry leaders, people of art, the intelligentsia, heads of enterprises and professionals – were shot or exiled.<sup>9</sup> The people were morally and physically crushed after the “purging of the country from the people’s enemies, spies and other saboteurs”. After these events, it was impossible to restore harmony to the sociopolitical climate in the Oblast. The Great Patriotic War put off, even still further, the resolving of the problems of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast.

The first postwar decree of the RSFSR CPC (Council of People’s Commissars) “On Measures of Strengthening and Further Development of the Economy of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast” (of January 26, 1946), among other things, provided for 50 teachers and 20 doctors, mainly Jews, to be sent to the Oblast. The decision of the CP secretariat that followed later, on April 4, “On Measures of Assisting the JAO Party Regional Committee in Organizing Mass-Political and Cultural-Mass work among the Population” involved issuing of the newspaper “Birobidzhaner Schtern” thrice a week instead of once and increased up to 10000 copies the circulation of the newspaper “Birobidzhanskaya Zvezda” (The Birobidzhan Star). It also involved the foundation of a book publishing house and the publication of an almanac in Yiddish. However, the suggestion of the Oblast authorities to transform the Jewish Oblast into an Autonomous Republic was blankly rejected.<sup>10</sup>

In January 1947, the first train of new settlers came to Birobidzhan from the Vinnitsa oblast.

All this inspired optimism and hope for the future of the JAO. The postwar relaxation of tension in regard to religious groups immediately brought to light the growing influence of the synagogues, which became a place of gathering for the Jewish community and cultural elite. Religious memorial services dedicated to the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazi, assembled hundreds and thousands of people.

In the first postwar years, there was a revival of Jewish religious life. With the obliteration of Yiddish culture in the western regions of the country, the closing down of Jewish educational and cultural organizations, the synagogue remained the only place to preserve Jewish traditions and it became a kind of cultural center for a lot of Jews. Even non-practicing Jews kept coming to the synagogue during the Jewish holidays. The synagogue was becoming a place for spiritual revival of the Jewish people.

On December 15, 1946, in Birobidzhan, in accordance with the resolution of the Council for Religious Affairs, a Jewish religious community which was opened on the grounds of having functioned before was first registered.<sup>11</sup>

The 70-years-old Hirsh-Moshe Khaimovich Katz, a shipping agent at the oblast union of cooperative societies, became the community's rabbi. According to the oblast archives, H.M. Katz came as a settler in December of 1933 and began to work in the capacity of a foreman at the Birobidzhan union of cooperative societies.<sup>12</sup>

The first synagogue was located in an apartment in a wooden house (17 Kalinin street), which is still there, in the same place, opposite the railroad station. However, the synagogue could not accommodate all the parishioners, so, after having functioned there from March to August of 1947, it moved to a big (372 sq. m) wooden house, built in 1936, at 3 Chapayev street, which used to be a pottery.<sup>13</sup>

A.I. Yarmitsky, the then chairman of the Town Executive Committee, allocated building materials for the renovation and reconstruction of the premises; the furniture was made at the local furniture factory. The same year, the Town Executive Committee passed a resolution on dividing the cemetery into two parts, the Russian and Jewish cemeteries. (Later, these resolutions of the Town Executive Committee will be used to bring a charge of nationalism against A.I. Yarmitsky.)

On September 24, 1947, on Yom-Kipur, in the presence of about 400 people, the formal opening of the synagogue was held there. The event was not left unnoticed by B.M. Grebennikov, the Commissary of the Council for Religious Affairs. We learn from his notes that on that day about 150 women-workers of the clothes factory, arbitrarily, left their place of work and went to the synagogue. The same year, 200 women-workers turned to the director of the factory with a petition to excuse them from work on holidays so that they could attend the synagogue. At the same time, the community applied to the Commissary with the request to excuse all the religious Jews from work for the three days of the holiday Yom Kipur, but they were refused.

The community numbered almost 300 people, and even on weekdays the synagogue was attended by 80 to 150 parishioners. According to B.M. Grebennikov, already at that time, the community was influential among the local population. In March of 1948, the Town Executive Committee issued a permit for the holding of services, and on September 28, there was signed an agreement on gratuitous permanent use of the premises.

Up to May 1948, the synagogue was attended not only by elderly people but by the young as well. On holidays (Pesah, Yom Kipur and Rosh Hashanah),

more than 400 people would gather there. Among the active members of the community there turned out to be close relatives of the employees of the Town and Oblast Executive Committees and some Party and Komsomol officials.

Members of the community vivaciously discussed the “Palestinian question” which was then on the agenda of the emergency session of the UNO General Assembly. Furthermore, the religious Jews were, at times, jealous of a second Jewish state appearing on the map, believing that the existing Jewish Autonomous oblast was quite sufficient.

Apart from setting up a Jewish cemetery in Birobidzhan, the community faced other problems, such as the publishing of a Jewish calendar, the opening of a kosher meat shop and the procurement of white flour for baking matza. For these ends, in the summer of 1948, the community raised some money and sent rabbi Katz to the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow to obtain a permit for those activities. They were denied the permit.

To limit the activity of the Jewish community, the Party and Soviet bodies began to put pressure on heads of enterprises who excused their employees from work on religious holidays. While in 1948, on Yom Kipur, the most significant Jewish holiday, there were 600 people who came to the synagogue, in 1949, on Yom Kipur, there were about 450, and in 1950 – only 350 people.

The Hebrew community was gradually losing its influence. While in March of 1948, it registered 300 people, by June 1 there were only 43. The attendance of the synagogue went down: after May 1948, 25–30 Jews came to the synagogue on Fridays, and 60 to 100 – on Saturdays. The money collections dropped drastically, as a result of which the cantor of the synagogue S.A. Kaplun did not get his salary for a number of months. In the winter of 1948–1949, the synagogue was often closed for lack of money for heating.

In 1949, analyzing the existing situation, B.M. Grebennikov pointed out that the drastic drop in synagogue attendance in Birobidzhan was brought about by the fact that the oblast and city party committees put pressure on some party members and candidate party members, as well as on city administrative officers, whose relatives frequented the synagogue and took part in religious ceremonies. It was during those persecutions when the community lost its rabbi. According to the Khabarovsk Krai archives, as of October 1, 1950, the post of the board chairman of the community was filled by Leiba Girshovich Gefen, born in 1880, who was registered in his documents as a ‘dependant’.

The year of 1950 became crucial in the decline of the community. In October, 1950, B.M. Grebennikov forwards to the Khabarovsk Krai party

committee a briefing note “On the Religious Movement and Cults in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast”, in which he informs the authorities about the still unsound situation in Birobidzhan and about the party members whose relatives sit on the community board. The secretary of the JAO party committee Adaskin was sent, with classification code, a list of “religious activists” which included members of the executive board and the checkup committee, and the community cantor (almost all of them born before the year of 1900 and were retired at the time).

Further on B.M. Grebennikov writes: “In the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, in the city of Birobidzhan, there is one officially registered Jewish religious community which numbers 57 religious people who attend the synagogue regularly. Among them there are 39 men and 18 women... Of those who visit the synagogue occasionally, especially on the great holidays of Yom-Kipur, Rosh-Hashana, Sukkot or Festival of Ingathering and Pesah, there are up to 400-odd people... In the oblast, apart from the registered community of Jews, there are religious Jews who get together in groups of 15–20 people in somebody’s apartment to hold religious ceremonies. Reportedly, there is such a group in the region center of Leninski, and they got together on September 20, for the holiday of Yom-Kipur. Reportedly, there is a *minyán* group at the Valdgeim collective farm in the Birobidzhan region.”

After the autumn holidays in 1950, chairman of the community board L.G. Gefen, as if confirming the occurring changes, acknowledged that “Every year, celebrations of our holidays looked shabbier, belief in the traditional religion was tumbling, the number of religious people attending the synagogue was getting less and less, and our expectations to collect more money during the holidays to renovate the synagogue did not come true.

At the beginning of the year 1951, L.G. Gefen meets the Commissary of the Council for Religious Affairs with the purpose of discussing further activities of the community. The board had lost a number of its members and there arose the problem of by-election, the attendance of religious ceremonies was going down and there wasn’t any money even for candles, let alone the fact that the synagogue was in bad need of renovation. Gefen informed the Commissary that he could not any longer discharge duties. By that time, under the pressure of the authorities, the key founders of the synagogue rabbi G.H. Katz, Z.I. Weiser and some other believers had left Birobidzhan.

In 1952, it was for the first time that no religious Jews from collective farms came to the synagogue for holidays, there were no more violations of labor discipline caused by arbitrary leave-taking and there were no more religious ceremonies held. Religious Jews were buried in the public cemetery

without observance of rituals. No longer did the community insist on having a separate cemetery for the Jews nor did it request making and selling of matza and kosher meat.

The last outburst of religious activity happened on September 18, 1953, on the holiday of Yom Kipur, when 500 people came to the synagogue. D.I. Weiserman supposes that it was this religious zeal that brought about the backlash on the part of the authorities. There was a fight and a night pogrom instigated in the building of the synagogue which occasioned in November of the same year the decision of the Oblast Soviet of the People's Deputies to close down the synagogue. This was the beginning of its decline. The fight and the row had set the congregants by the ears and they stopped coming to the synagogue.<sup>14</sup>

The decrease in the community's religious activity was a matter of course against the background of utterly atrocious sanctions taken, beginning with 1949, against the Oblast leaders and the Jewish intellectuals, including writers, poets, actors and teachers. It was during that period that the Oblast Museum and the L.M. Kaganovich Jewish theater were closed down, and the teaching of Yiddish at schools was completely abolished. It was a head-on attack directed at the Jews under the guise of fighting against bourgeois nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

In February 1949, the First Secretary of the Birobidzhan Communist Party Regional Committee (Party OBKOM) A.N. Bakhmutsky stated in the Ideological Activity section of his report that "[...] there had been a grave error made by the Party OBKOM when anti-religious propaganda was completely neglected, despite the fact that there were alarming signs of religious activities. The OBKOM failed to draw any conclusions for themselves even after the relatives of some of our executives, including those at the Oblast level, began to attend the synagogue. The Bureau of the OBKOM had only chosen to reprimand these executives instead of studying, in the party organizations, the Party's approach towards religion [...] We have to launch an anti-religious attack against both Jewish and Christian religions [...]"<sup>15</sup>

However, these confessions didn't help Bakhmutsky who had to balance between struggling for the ethnic development of the Oblast and countering the extreme pressure of accusations of "bourgeois nationalism" and "encouragement of the cosmopolitans".

Two years later, A.I. Yarmitsky, A.N. Bakhmutsky and the chairman of the Oblast Executive Committee M.E. Levitin were expelled from the Party because of their "bourgeois nationalism and cosmopolitanism". Their political

and ethnic-related views were declared erroneous and they were sentenced to various prison terms (subsequently, they were exonerated). P.V. Simonov, who superseded A.N. Bakhmutsky as Secretary of the OBKOM, eradicated the flower of the regional intelligentsia and uprooted the young growth of Jewish culture. In 1952, the post of the Party leader of the Oblast was filled by A.P. Shitikov, who had also had a hand in the fighting against ‘rootless cosmopolitans’ and ‘bourgeois nationalists’.<sup>16</sup>

A sad end was awaiting the Birobidzhan synagogue. The Yiddish poet Israel Emiot was an eyewitness to those events. This is how he narrates in his book *The Birobidzhan Affair* the atmosphere of the tragedy and the emotions of the people who partook in saving the synagogue’s belongings and in putting out the fire:

*“A tragic accident suddenly befell the Jews of Birobidzhan. Their only synagogue burned to the ground. Not that there had been a congregation as such around the synagogue. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur the synagogue was filled with Jews, including some young people, but on the Sabbath only a few older people showed up for services.*

*The fire had started in a workshop next door. Several adjacent buildings also were destroyed. Luckily, the Torah scrolls in the synagogue were saved by several of the worshipers, who plunged into the burning building to rescue whatever they could. They even managed to save some torn prayer book and a siddur.*

*The sky over Birobidzhan was red with the flames consuming the last fortress of Jewishness that the older generation had been safeguarding at great sacrifice to themselves. Later they rented a little house somewhere and maintained an island of traditional Judaism in the desert that was left by the destruction of modern Jewish culture in the Jewish Autonomous Region.”<sup>17</sup>*

Nina Meisler, the daughter of the Birobidzhan synagogue’s shoykhet Borukh Meisler is now living in Israel. Here is the record of the story she told me in May 2008:

*“After the fire, my father came all covered with soot. Together with the parishioners he was trying to save what could be brought out of the synagogue: the Torah Scrolls, prayer books, shofar, and other items including prayer shawls, tefillins, menorahs, etc. The most valuable things the parishioners brought to our house. Books and other things lay all over the house. A month later, father announced that we were all going to Ukraine.*

*It was a long trip. We visited Moscow, Kiev, Kamenets-Podolsk and of course the town of Zhmerinka where father was born. In all those places, my father first went to the synagogue where he met with the rabbinate and congregation and they talked about the misfortune that had befallen us. He sought help for buying a small house for the synagogue and furniture that had been destroyed by the fire. I was present during those conversations and, though many things were unknown to me, the essence of it was clear. In two months we visited all those cities and towns and father managed to collect part of the money needed for the restoration of the synagogue. All the way back to Birobidzhan, he prayed for the house to be bought as fast as possible and for the synagogue to be restored.”*

In 1956 a small house was bought with the money collected. In the purchase/sale agreement of August 22 it was stated that the Birobidzhan Jewish religious community, in the name of its board chairman Leiba Gefen, had acquired a log house for 26,400 rubles. Apparently, there was a decision to reopen the synagogue for the pensioners, since there were no other parishioners left at that time.

In Valdgeim I managed to learn the fate of Leiba Gefen from his nephew Zalman: “The Gefens brought prayer shawls and tefillins with them, but there was no synagogue or a preaching-house there. I suppose that not all the Jews who came there were religious, but they all observed their holidays. The shoykhet would be invited to slaughter a chicken for the holiday, and Leiba was always around to recite a prayer. Uncle Leiba recited the Torah, siddur and all the prayers.

In Valdgeim there was no synagogue, so people would regularly gather at somebody’s home. There was a women’s gathering once at our house. When the Jewish Autonomous oblast was formally declared, Leiba moved to the town and devoted all his spare time to the Birobidzhan community. He became the chanter and upheld the interests of the community before the authorities; at least, this is what the old people said about him when recollecting the past.<sup>18</sup>

Using the old plan of the house that was remodeled for the synagogue, with the help of D. Kofman and also basing on recollections of the children of former parishioners, I managed to reconstruct the arrangement of the religious articles in the synagogue.

It was an old one-storey stove-heated building. Behind a plank outer door, that would not stay tightly closed, there was a corridor through which one entered a seventy-two square meter room. In the center of it there was a *bimah* (an elevated area or platform intended to serve the place from which

the Torah was read or other speeches were made) with a railing around, from which the cantor recited prayers. Opposite the *bimah* stood a long table with benches around it. Against the wall, there was a carved wooden *Aron Kodesh* (a closet in the synagogue for the Torah scrolls). On the front it had a red velvet *parochet* (curtain). On the table, there were several candlesticks and a *menorah*. From the big hall there was a passage leading to two smaller rooms. One of them was for women during the recital of prayers and the other one was the community chairman's office. The walls in all the rooms were plastered and whitewashed with a grayish slaked lime which made the premise look untended and dingy. While most of the windows were normally closed with wooden shutters that would be opened only on holidays, two windows were just boarded up altogether.

The synagogue service was conducted jointly by Leiba Gefen, Mark Sluch, Avrum Zinger and Eynakh Altsiker as a cantor. The *shoykhet* was Borukh Meisler. Though the parishioners no longer gathered for Sabbath as actively as before, there was always a *minyan*. On Jewish holidays, up to a hundred people used to come to the synagogue, and on those occasions the doors and window shutters in the house would be opened for the people outside to hear the words of the prayers. On those days nobody had the heart to close down the congregational center, as only old people came to pray. The young people didn't come to the synagogue, and therefore, in the opinion of the authorities there was no harm done.

The old house was living out its remaining days, and when it began to fall apart, which was speeded up by a succession of fires, nobody endeavored to restore it. To top it all, there happened a burglary: the sacred for the Jews Torah Scrolls had been stolen. In 1986 the Town Executive Committee repaired a house in Mayakovsky street and put it at the disposal of the community headed by Dov (Boris) Kofman. Everything that was left after the fires and the burglary was brought there.

The community's activities were barely visible, the fact that is corroborated by official reports and briefing notes submitted by the Khabarovsk Krai commissioners for Religious Affairs. From these notes it becomes evident that by the year of 1985, the community had, virtually, ceased functioning: there was neither an executive body nor a rabbi. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that some people tried to organize some sort of activities. For instance, on the initiative of the "Birobidzhaner Shtern" newspaper editor L. Shkolnik, a Jewish wedding with a *huppah*, though without a real rabbi, was organized. Rather, it was a demonstrative act but it did arouse the national identity feelings of the Jews.

In September 1996, the Religious Judaic Community Beyt Tshoova was officially registered as a part of the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations in Russia (CJROAR). In 2001, Chief Rabbi of Russia Adolph Shaevich nominated Oleg Shavulski for the post of the community rabbi. A few years later Shavulski emigrated to Israel, and now rabbi Dov Kofman is the head of the community.

In spite of all its efforts, Beyt Tshoova failed to attract the attention and obtain the support of the Birobidzhan public. The outcome of it was the foundation, in 1998, of the Jewish Religious Community Freid as a part of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia (FJCR). The support of local authorities and the vigorous activity of the community Board headed by Lev Toitman helped to bring together the Birobidzhan Jews.

In 2000, with the financial support of the FJCR, AJJDC and the Jewish Agency in Russia, there was opened a community centre comprising a prayer hall, library, computer classroom and the Hesed charitable service providing lower-income residents of the Oblast with free meals, grocery sets, medicines and medical rehabilitation equipment. Freid has its newspaper *Obschina* (in Russian for Community).

In 2002, on the recommendation of the Chief Rabbi of Russia Ben Lazar, rabbi Mordechai Scheiner arrived in Birobidzhan. Two years later, next to the community center there was built a synagogue where now everyday services are held and Jewish holidays are celebrated.

In 2005, a sukka of a new design, made by the Birobidzhan Metalloplast shop, was put up beside the Freid community synagogue. In Israel, where it is still quite warm in mid-October, the walls of sukkas are made of canvas stretched over a frame and of branches as the roofing material. While the two previous Sukkot holidays had been held in a light tent, from now on they used an amenities building the walls of which were heat-insulated and covered with plywood from the inside, and the roof, as is prescribed by the Jewish tradition, was made of fir-tree branches. Already three years in succession, this eighteen-square-meter sukka has accommodated the Sukkot holidays.

It is already four years that a weekly TV show Yidishkite has been on in Birobidzhan with rabbi Mordechai Scheiner and Rabanit Esther featuring in it. The purpose of the show is to inform about the Jewish life in the town and the Oblast and, of course, to tell people about Jewish traditions and culture.

It is already three years in a row that the Chanukah holiday in Birobidzhan has been marked with kindling of the lights of the *hanukiah* in the very center of the town, in a newly built boulevard. In 2007, a Chanukah light was also kindled at the top of the Tikhonkaya bald mountain which is depicted on the

Birobidzhan municipal arms. On the television tower on the summit of the mountain, there are floodlights that were turned on synchronously with the kindling of the *hanukiah*. The lights could be seen dozens of kilometers away from the passing trains and automobiles. It was the author's of the present article idea to place a *hanukiah* atop the mountain. It is the highest positioned *hanukiah* in Russia and soon it will be added to the Guinness Book of Russian Records.

In November 2007, there was held a Report and Election Meeting. Seventeen members were elected to the new board, including representatives of local authorities, cultural and educational figures and businessmen. R.I. Leder was elected head of the community.

With the financial support from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, in Birobidzhan and in several districts of the Oblast there were opened diet-kitchens daily attended by over 100 low-income and single Birobidzhanians. Over 600 low-income members of the community receive free grocery sets.

Under the auspices of the community there operates the Birobidzhan Jewish Public University, the only of its kind institution in the Far East, where they teach Hebrew, the history of Jewish culture and classical Jewish texts. The community activities include the work of a number of creative teams. There are the Haverim Youth Club, a women's club, a club of former infant ghetto and concentration camp prisoners, and the Einikait Cultural and Enlightenment Society. Members of the club hold cognitive events, gather on Sabbaths and jointly celebrate Jewish holidays. R.I. Leder is planning to actively carry on the community's charitable activity, as well as to further develop its cultural, educational and other projects.

This year, at the workshops held in Birobidzhan and the village of Amurzet, on the eve of the Pesah holiday, rabbi Mordechai Scheiner and the community leaders told the participants about the Pesah traditions. The workshops were attended by about two hundred people. On the initiative of the rabbi, a special matza stove had been built at the Metalloplast shop. Both grownups and children partook in baking of matza in the Birobidzhan synagogue.

The Community Council developed a project for the year of 2008 the aim of which is to involve all social strata of the Jewish population in a full-fledged Jewish life, to familiarize them with the basic concepts of Judaism, Jewish culture, literature, history and traditions, and to promote the preservation of Jewish values and the passing on of them from one generation to another.

The project should afford the Jewish population of remote corners of the Oblast the possibility to partake in a whole range of religious, cultural and

charitable events without having to travel outside of the places they live in. In almost every settlement there are Jewish families, the descendants of the first settlers. For many years, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those Jews had been bereaved of knowledge of Jewish traditions, history and religion. Together with Jews, there live people of other ethnic groups who, as an audience, will participate in the events, which will teach them to respect Jewish culture and traditions and will eventually strengthen the interethnic relations in the Oblast. Virtually, no such activities had ever been held before in the villages of the Oblast.

The project also involves delivering lectures on Judaism, Sabbath gatherings together with the local population, exhibitions of articles of Judaica and books on Judaism. It also holds 'The Jewish World as Seen by the Children' expositions of drawings and handicrafts, Jewish Community Freid folk performances, supplies the local population with Jewish literature, newspapers and magazines, and volunteer doctors providing medical consultations. It also includes delivering grocery sets, medicines and medical rehabilitation equipment directly to the Hased clients.

Within the framework of the project, in the Lenin and October regions of the Oblast, there were held Days of the Jewish Culture attended by about 400 people. Such festivals are going to be conducted in every region of the Oblast. The Freid community, the initiators of the project, believe that all this will be instrumental for the rise of Jewish self-awareness.

The community is planning to actively partake in the International Festival of Jewish Culture and Arts that takes place every other year in Birobidzhan.

The National Yiddish Book Center has sent over 200 CDs of the Sami Rohr library of recorded Yiddish Books including recordings of stories by Sholom Aleichem, Mendele Moykher Sforim, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Peretz Markish, David Bergelson and other renowned writers recited by prominent Yiddish performers. This fine present is a great help for the pupils of the Jewish school, as well as for all those who like to hear the works of Jewish literature recited in Mame-Loshn (the mother tongue).

In recent years, some unknown chapters of the Birobidzhan synagogue history have been revealed. In February 2006, over fifty years after the synagogue on the Chapaev Street had burnt to the ground, rabbi Mordechai Scheiner and the author of this article came to rabbi Dov Kofman to see the antiques he keeps. There were authentic historic relics: ritual articles and sacred books that belonged years ago to the Birobidzhan congregation, indicative of a lively Jewish life in the foregone Birobidzhan.

Against the wall, there were two old *Aron Kodeshes*. On the taller one, you could see a partly burnt depiction of the Tables of the Testimony and of the *Magen David* with the name of G-d in the center of it.

Between the *Aron Kodeshes* there stood a big *amud* (lectern) where the cantor stands while leading the prayer. On the *amud*, the words of a prayer are inscribed, and beneath there is a half-erased text: “The *amud* was presented by Sarah, the daughter of rabbi Avrom Ber.” On the lower shelf of the closet, there lay carefully folded *parochets*. Made of red velvet, by now they had almost lost their color and were substantially worn out. Rabbi Scheiner could hardly make out the letters: “The *parochet* was presented to the Synagogue by Viti, the daughter of rabbi Sholom Nothe Fayman, 10 of Av.”

The Jews know very well the day that comes before that day, it is the 9 of Av. Apparently, it was then that the congregation began to restore the synagogue damaged by the fire. And on 10<sup>th</sup> of Av 5717 from creation, they presented the synagogue with those Jewish symbols and ritual articles. The fact that the *parochet* and *amud* were presented to the synagogue on 10<sup>th</sup> of Av testifies that the religious culture of the congregation was extremely high. The next day after the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av mourning, they brought everything that was necessary to revive the temple. The people did it in the name of their faith and conscience. In a situation like that, there couldn't have been anything more encouraging on the part of the community than to raise money and to buy another building, so that religious life would continue, the synagogue would not close and the hope that united the people in this calamity would stay alive.

On one of the tables, there is a plate with the name of Borukh Meisler, the chanter and the shoykhet of the Birobidzhan religious community in the 1950s. There remained about a dozen of such desks with names of their former owners on some of them.

Besides old *parochets*, in the closet, there were several kippahs, tefillin and tefillin bags, Torah covers, prayer shawls and five big bags with prayer-books, siddurs, calendars and books, most of them torn and partly burnt. Though half a century ago these books were saved from fire, tongues of flame had touched these pages and binders leaving black scorched spots on them as reminders of that fire.

Some of the prayer books had been used so much that there were hardly any page margins left in them. How many Jews held such a book in their hands I wonder? In what shtetls and synagogues did this book support the spirit of its owner? Who brought it to Tikhonkaya? Many settler Jews came from Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and foreign countries bringing along in their

bundles the most precious things for them – books, tefillins, prayer shawls – that had been passed on from Great-Grandfathers to Grandfathers, to Fathers and the next generations.

Unfolding the old prayer shawls I recollected a story written by Viktor Fink about the Valdgeim Jews praying in old patched prayer shawls, and it seemed to me that what I was holding in my hands were the very shawls Fink described. They had been mended, apparently, by different people at different times and had patches on them made of various fabrics sewed on with various threads. Those prayer shawls were not of the kind I had seen many years ago in Russia. They could have been more than one century old.

Bags with books and all the other things were taken to the synagogue. There, with the help of rabbi Mordechai Scheiner everything was sorted out and written down. About 200 books were examined. Two oldest books, Bereshit and Bamidbar, were published by the Waks printing-house in 1942, which makes them 166 years old! Among the books, there are also well-worn leather-bound rarities with some pages missing, the date and place of which is impossible to define. Some of the books have elaborate stamps on the covers with the names of their former owners (printed in Yiddish and pre-reform-spelling Russian).

You can find there prayer books printed in Berdichev, Berlin, Warsaw, Vienna, Vilna, Zhytomyr, Jerusalem, Krakow, Lublin, Odessa, Petrikov, Rödelheim, Chernovtsy. Among them there are translations from Hebrew, including 20-odd books translated into Yiddish, and in some cases it is old Yiddish, long out of use. There are some pages from prayer books with pre-revolutionary Russian translations. There are five copies (one is about 170 years old) of the Tsena uRena (Come Out and See), an easy-read biblical commentary book for not so well-versed in biblical texts believers and women. There are also 50-odd various mahzors. In rabbi Mordechai Scheiner's opinion, all this means that in those days a lot of parishioners would come to the synagogue on Jewish holidays.

In some of the prayer books, rabbi Mordechai Scheiner discovered texts of a prayer dedicated to the Russian Czar. The prayer expressed loyal devotion to the Czar: the Jews pleaded with G-d to bless Czar Alexander Nikolaevich and his wife Maria Alexandrovna, as well as heir apparent Nicolay Alexandrovich and his sons and daughters, so that the enemies of the Emperor would die at his feet while he would reign happily.

In one of the bags we found 15 calendars with photographs made by the parishioners themselves. The 1920-1921 calendar combines Jewish, Gregorian and Julian dates. In some of the calendars there are handwritten

Yiddish notes marking anniversaries of relatives. We also found some ten-odd tablets that are displayed during a synagogue divine service. One of the manuscripts was a sample of a *ketubba*, Jewish prenuptial agreement stating the husband's commitments to his wife.

There is a cantor's kippah, 15 very old prayer shawls, 6 Torah scroll handles and Torah covers, 9 *parochets*, 29 bags for tefillins, prayer shawls and prayer books, a goose-quill and a withered tefillin parchment.

There is a small bag full of shreds and fragments of paper pages which rabbi Mordechai Scheiner defined as a *genizah*, a depository for fragments of texts from sacred books, unneeded lists and manuscripts.

Among the sacred books, we found a handwritten with a goose-quill document in Yiddish: an A3 sheet of paper reinforced with several layers of glued-on exercise-book sheets, with an appeal to the congregation on the eve of a holiday, most likely, it was Yom Kippur. It seems it was fixed on the outer wall of the synagogue since there are rusty traces of nails on the paper and the text is substantially faded.

The document is a tragic story of a family that moved to Birobidzhan, and it carries a touching appeal to the people. It was written in 1959 by a man who, together with his family, had lived through all the horrors of the dreadful wartime. Concluding his appeal, the man wrote: "Soon we are going to celebrate the holiday and recite the prayer mentioning all the names. And tomorrow we shall come to the synagogue for the El Moley Rahamim prayer and make a donation for their sake, and it will all be rewarded soon nowadays, may G-d grant it."<sup>19</sup>

But perhaps the most precious finding is a fragment of a Torah scroll with the entire Vayikra parashah in it, and two antique wooden scroll handles. All the above findings occupy a deserving place in the collections of the Birobidzhan synagogue Museum of Judaism attended every day by citizens and guests of the town.

The history of the Birobidzhan synagogue is being restored bit by bit. It is done to pay respect to the people who in the face of ostracism and fear remained devoted to their faith. It is thanks to their incredible toil that far away from the lights of civilization there was created the town of Birobidzhan and the Autonomous Oblast named Jewish in their honor.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Бренер И. История откровения, или откровение истории. Биробиджанер Штерн. 22 ноября 2007.

- <sup>2</sup> *Костырченко Г.В.* Тайная политика Сталина: власть и антисемитизм. Изд. 2-е, доп. М.: Международные отношения, 2003. С. 111.
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- <sup>14</sup> *Вайсерман Д.И.* Указ. соч. С. 360–361.
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- <sup>16</sup> *Вайсерман Д.И.* Указ. соч. С. 360.
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# CULTURE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION

## MEMORIALIZATION OF THE HOLOCAUST IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: CURRENT STATE, PROBLEMS AND TRENDS

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In many European countries and the USA the attitude towards commemoration of the Holocaust is one of the pillars of programs aimed at promoting tolerance and civil society. In the Eastern Europe countries (specifically, in Poland and Hungary<sup>1</sup> and, in recent years, in Romania and Croatia), the policy regarding the Holocaust and the commemoration of the Jewish sites became an issue of public discussions and is reflected in governmental educational programs, it is taken into account when new museums and educational centers are established. Primary trends and peculiarities of the policy concerning the memory of extermination of Soviet Jews during the years of the Nazi occupation, came into the notice of historians in the post-Soviet space, virtually, right after the establishment of the independent states whose territories were invaded during the war by the Nazi and their collaborators (in Moldova this process, with the involvement of government institutions, began only a few years ago). The most active discussions on the memory of Holocaust, and the participation of local nationalists in it go on in Ukraine and Lithuania. In Latvia, workshops dedicated to the Holocaust are held annually under the auspices of the government. In Estonia, the National Holocaust Remembrance Day is held on January 27, the anniversary of the day in 1945 when the Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated. In Latvia and Lithuania they hold their National Holocaust Remembrance Days on anniversaries of the genocide of local Jews. In Ukraine, the Anniversary Remembrance Day of the Babi Yar Tragedy is commemorated on the national level.

In the present article, we will continue our previous study of the historical memory of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union and the former USSR countries, in which we only briefly touched upon the subject of realization of the Holocaust and its lessons in contemporary Russia.<sup>2</sup> We will dwell on several topics: the interrelation of public organizations and the authorities on the subject of preserving the memory of the Holocaust in Russia; the addressing of the theme of Holocaust in documentary and fiction films, in literature and art; research and educational projects; programs for memorialization of the Holocaust victims in the territory of the Russian Federation.

### **I. Memory of the Holocaust in contemporary Russia: Society and the authorities**

Neo-Nazism and political and ethnic extremism are becoming increasingly perceptible realities in Russia. With cases of ethnically motivated murders, persecution of migrants and attempts to found new nationalistic organizations, Russian authorities are forced to seek ways of overcoming these tendencies. Is there any and how great is the demand for historical memory of the Holocaust on the part of Russian public authorities and educational institutions? The hushing up of the Holocaust issue over many decades has affected the authorities, Russian society as a whole, the educational system, the historical studies and even many intellectuals much more than in any other post-Soviet country in Europe. The continuity in the attitude towards the history of the Great Patriotic and Second World War, as well as the continuity of memorialization of its victims, left a deep imprint on public consciousness, academic programs and the concept of upbringing the youth in patriotic spirit. In Russia, the Holocaust issues occupy quite a limited space on today's agenda. It would be a simplification to say that this indubitable fact is only the heritage of the state anti-Semitism. Even among the leaders of the main Jewish organizations in Russia, the process of realization of the significance of this theme was ambiguous and, when compared with such processes in other post-Soviet states, apart from similarities, it demonstrates some special features.

We will try to examine the attitude of the authorities and of society towards the preservation of the historical memory of the Holocaust within the problem-and-chronology frame of reference. It will be recalled that in the late 1980s, revival of the Jewish culture and legally permitted activities of many Jewish organizations in Russia began with the issue of memorialization of the Holocaust victims. Commemoration events of the Holocaust

Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) took place in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Yekaterinburg. The Leningrad Holocaust Research Group had organized an expedition to the Holocaust sites in the Smolensk Oblast the outcome of which was “The Smolensk Babi Yars” documentary. Beginning in 1989, travelling exhibits of the Museum of Tolerance, Los Angeles, were shown in Moscow, Leningrad and in a number of other RSFSR cities. In those days, the contacts with the authorities were limited to obtaining permits for setting up monuments to the Jewish Holocaust victims. In the autumn of 1991, after intensive and time-consuming efforts of the Leningrad Jewish organizations’ leaders, such a monument was erected in the town of Pushkino. Shortly before disintegration of the USSR, the memorial events and issues related to the memorialization of the Holocaust victims were handled by the VAAD, an umbrella Jewish organization in the USSR, by its local branches, by the unions of Jewish war invalids and veterans of war and by unions of ghetto and Nazi concentration camps prisoners. The Holocaust Remembrance Day was held with the participation of the representatives of the Israeli diplomatic missions and the USA Jewish organizations.

In the early 1990s, all these activities were viewed exclusively as a means of strengthening the Jewish identity. Undoubtedly, instrumental in this respect were Russian translations of the works of Israeli writers (Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, Chaim Schatzker and others), as well as the publishing of *The Black Book* in 1991, and the multitude of articles and collections of documents from the previously not accessible files of national archives appearing, mostly, in Jewish periodicals. This trend prevailed in the first half of the 1990s, initiating the birth of a number of new Jewish organizations, including youth organizations. Special programs for Jewish youth and teachers were carried out by the Jewish Agency in Russia, AJJDC, the USA-based Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture agency in Russia, etc. At the same time, there was a sense of urgent need, basing on European and American experience, for a dialog with the authorities and for extending the Holocaust topic beyond the awareness education within the ethnic environment. The first signs of this new trend were documentary exhibitions devoted to Anna Frank (at the Moscow Library of Foreign Literature in 1990) and to the history of the Black Book (at the Moscow Central House of Artists in 1991). While the former exhibition was curated by the Amsterdam Anna Frank Foundation, the latter was organized by an action group of historians, archivists and journalists using documents of the former Central Archive of the October Revolution of the USSR (today the State Archive of the Russian Federation).

Organizers of the latter exhibition, Ilia and Maria Altman, Ekaterina Uvarova, Maria Yukhvets and Elena Yakovich, were the ones who took the lead in promoting a conceptually new approach to the memorialization of the Holocaust victims in the territory of the Former USSR. In 1992, the Ministry of Justice of Russia registered the Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Center, the first in the post-Soviet space special-purpose organization of this kind (at present, the Center has the status of an inter-regional non-governmental organization).<sup>3</sup> Thereby, for the first time ever in Eastern Europe, there has been established a model of an independent non-governmental organization seeking to demonstrate before the government agencies, management of educational authorities and leaders of the Jewish organizations a concept for preserving the memory of the Holocaust as an integral part of the tragic and heroic history of the Soviet people during the Second World War. The concept was first theoretically substantiated by Mikhail Gefter in his papers and articles that were published in his book *Echo of the Holocaust and the Jewish Issue in Russia* in 1995.

Obviously, such an undertaking couldn't have been accomplished without the help of the government, since in the first half of the 1990s the Jewish oligarchs didn't respond to requests to sponsor these initiatives. The Holocaust Center came up before President Yeltsin and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation with an idea of establishing a state Holocaust history museum. The first discussions on the issue with Ms. Galina Starovoitova, the nationalities policy adviser to president, started at the end of September, 1991. At the same time, activities aimed at the preservation and management of the Holocaust documentary heritage in the USSR territory were also started. They included a consistent collecting of documents and materials from private archives, as well as preparing travelling documentary exhibits shown in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Vladimir and Tyumen, which, before the Center was allotted its own premises, became the means of drawing public attention to the historical memory of the Holocaust. In 1996, as a final outcome of sustained efforts, the Russian Government allotted to the Center separate premises where we now have a library, video collection, and an archive of private files and collections of prisoners of ghetto and of participants of the Great Patriotic War and the Resistance Movement. There is also a lecture hall and an exhibition room with a permanent documentary exhibit there. However, the Center failed to obtain the authorities' approval for a Holocaust Museum that would be a part of one of the existing state museums, or for the appropriation of funds for building such a museum. At that time, it proved impossible to convince the leaders of Russian-based and international Jewish organizations operating in Russia

of the importance of the Holocaust theme both for the memorialization of the victims and for the fight against anti-Semitism. Their support of the Center's first projects was, as a rule, more symbolic than real.

In order to draw the authorities' and public attention to the issue of a specialized museum, an Interregional Foundation for the Establishment of the Holocaust Museum<sup>4</sup> was set up within the framework of the Center. The first in the CIS region exposition devoted to the history of the Holocaust was prepared within the shortest possible time, thanks to the efforts of the Foundation. It was opened by the President of Russia in 1998 at the Holocaust Memorial Synagogue located on Poklonnaya Hill in Moscow.<sup>5</sup> An exhibition dedicated to the history of the Holocaust in the territory of the USSR, to the Jewish Resistance movement and to the Jewish participation in the war was placed there. The exhibition is actively visited by Moscow schoolchildren. A number of Jewish community events, including the Holocaust memorable days are conducted there along with the acquisition of its collections which is being carried out by the staff. However, the Memorial Synagogue being a structural subdivision of the Russian Jewish Congress (RJC) rather than a separate entity, and having limited human resources, has never been designed to become a state museum or a research and methods development center for memorialization of the Holocaust victims on a nationwide scale.

A new momentum for the implementation of the idea was given by the 2000 Stockholm Holocaust conference attended by heads and representatives of 47 nations.

In 2001, the Holocaust Foundation worked out its concept and suggested to establish in Moscow the State Museum of Genocide-Holocaust-Tolerance. A tentative agreement to sponsor it was expressed by a number of major Russian businessmen. The initiative met the support of deputy prime-minister Ms. V.I. Matvienko who represents Russia at the Holocaust Conference. In December 2002, the Russian government instructed the Ministry of Culture and other departments concerned to examine the concept of the future museum and educational facility. However, under various excuses the Ministry of Culture didn't do anything in that respect. In an attempt to involve the world public in attaining the goal, the Center and the Holocaust Foundation began negotiations with Natan Sharansky, who was Israel's Minister for Jerusalem and for the Diaspora at that time. In November 2003, President of Russia Vladimir Putin announced at the meeting with Prime-minister of Israel Ariel Sharon that an exposition devoted to the Holocaust is going to be opened at the Moscow Museum of the Great Patriotic War on Poklonnaya Hill. As an outcome, the Genocide of Peoples exposition, a part of which is dedicated to

the Holocaust theme, was opened there in June 2008, two years later than it was initially designed.

Another project is also underway in Moscow. The leadership of the Federation of the Jewish Communities of Russia announced a few years ago that the Russian Jewish Museum of Tolerance will be built by the year of 2010. A substantial section of its exposition will commemorate the Holocaust. The fact that several expositions on the Holocaust theme are presented in Moscow reflects the changes in society's attitude towards the Holocaust theme. Much interest was earned by the exposition dedicated to Raoul Wallenberg and by a series of educational events called One Can Conquer Alone, that were held by the Swedish Embassy with the participation of the Holocaust Center and a number of other Russian organizations. However, such expositions and exhibits alone cannot change the situation radically. It appears that only a specialized Museum in Moscow combining methods-developing and educational functions could be instrumental in gaining substantial progress in the preservation of the historical memory of the Holocaust, the universal tragedy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Commemoration events became another important way of drawing public attention to the issue of historical memory of the Holocaust. The first memorial gathering dedicated to the victims of the Nazi regime and the Resistance Movement heroes was held by the Holocaust Center under the auspices of the government of the city of Moscow, the Israeli Embassy and of a number of other organizations. From this moment on, holding such all-Russia gatherings, rather than making them nationally-limited, became a calling card of the Holocaust Center. These events differ significantly from those taking place in most of the post-Soviet countries. They are, in fact, requiem ceremonies attended by the Russian public at large rather than by exclusively Jewish public. In Moscow, these gatherings are held in best halls (Central House of Cinema and Central House of Writers) and are addressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Education and Minister of Culture, by the senior management of the Moscow City Government, renowned public figures, well-known actors, singers and musicians. In 1994 and 1999, President Boris Yeltsin, and in 2004, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia sent their greetings to participants of the meetings. Awarding of the "Righteous among the Nations" medals and certificates of honor to persons of different nationalities who had rescued Jews during the war became an important feature of the gatherings. No less than a third of the audience are students of non-Jewish educational establishments. Gatherings commemorating the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (in 1992, 1997 and 2002) and the Doctors' Plot (in 1993) were held in a similar way. During the last ten years, the Holocaust

commemorations were held in Smolensk, Rostov-on-Don, St. Petersburg, and in a number of other Russian cities.

Beginning in January 1995, on the initiative of the Holocaust Center, commemoration gatherings dedicated to the day of January 27, 1945, when the Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated by the Red Army, are being held. Beginning with 2007, after the International Holocaust Remembrance Day was designated by the United Nations General Assembly, the date is marked in Russia especially solemnly. Owing to the wide coverage by the media, particularly, by the news releases of the leading Russian TV-channels, these memorial events aroused a broad resonance among the general public and contributed to keeping the information on the Holocaust engraved in public consciousness. It should be mentioned that unlike many European countries, including those in the post-Soviet space, in Russia, the nation's leaders never used to take part in such meetings. Yet, the President of Russia delivered a speech at the 2005 Holocaust Forum in Krakow, and the Chairman of the Federation Council of the RF delivered one at the 2006 Forum in Kiev. Russia was among the countries which proposed to the UN General Assembly the resolution on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. But so far, our country has not joined the group of over 20 world powers which mark National Holocaust Memorial Day, despite the fact that it was our army that liberated the Auschwitz concentration camp. More important, the memorial events of January 27 and Yom HaShoah cause ambiguous reaction among the leaders of political parties, public figures and the educational community. In the late 1990s, the Communist and LDPR deputies refused to hold a moment of silence in commemoration of the Holocaust victims. At the 2000 Stockholm Holocaust conference, Russia was among the few countries not represented by President or Prime Minister. The attendance of the Forum by the Deputy Prime Minister Ms. V.I. Matvienko was criticized in the nationalist and communist press (it is suffice to mention a heading in the "Soviet Russia" newspaper that read: 'Schindler in a skirt'). When in January 2008, the Government of the City of Moscow, on the initiative of the RJC, decided to conduct in all the schools of the city lessons dedicated to the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, there were statements appearing in e-Media to the effect that 'the Holocaust has nothing to do with Russia'. A concealed opposition to this theme is evidenced when the state educational programs and standards are discussed. The word 'Holocaust' was not mentioned in the state-sponsored 2000–2005 Federal Program for the Formation of a Tolerant Consciousness (though, a number of schoolbooks directly involving the theme were published in that period). However, the

word is mentioned in the draft state educational General History standards for high schools which had a positive effect on the schoolbooks published in recent years in Russia (the Standard is still under revision and has not been approved by the State Duma). The Holocaust theme is present in academic programs of many regional teachers' refresher courses, teachers' colleges and historical departments of state universities. Still, the lack of a state program on this theme prevents Russia, unlike many European countries, the Baltic states among them, from becoming a member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research.

The ambiguity in the attitude to the Holocaust theme in Russia is evidenced by how matters stand with immortalization of the heroic deeds of people who saved Jews during the war. One of the main lines of our activities is promotion of the awarding of the "Righteous among the Nations" titles, as well as preservation and publishing of documentary evidences about those deeds. Under the Holocaust Center there is the Righteous Among the Nations Fraternal Society bringing together residents of the Moscow region who were awarded the title. The Society carries out educational work among the youth and it published a textbook for schoolchildren about the Righteous of Russia.

## **II. The Nazi policy of extermination of the Jews – as reflected in documentary and feature films**

Beginning in the early 1990s, documentary and feature films about the Holocaust were regularly shown in Russia. In mid 1990s, the famous '*Schindler's List*' did not make a big hit in Russian movie houses despite a huge advertising campaign. However, the Russian film industry was suffering a setback at that time.

On TV, the '*Schindler's List*' and a number of other films ('*La Vita e Bella*', '*Night Porter*', '*Sophie's Choice*', etc.) were more successful. The documentary '*The Brest Ghetto*' produced with the direct involvement of the Holocaust Center and demonstrated in 1995 on the First Russian TV channel, was awarded the Grand Prix of the Montenegro film festival and was subsequently many times shown in Russia and Belarus. Alexander Zeldovich's documentary '*The Trial*' (2003), produced under the auspices of the Holocaust Foundation, gives a comparative analysis of Nazism and Stalinism, using the USSR Jewish Antifascist Committee's case as an example. The documentary was shown on one of the Russian TV channels and took part in a number of film festivals.

In 2002, Pavel Chukhraj's '*Children from the Abyss*' film based on video evidences from the Spielberg Foundation, with prominent actor Michael

Ulyanov reading the narration, was shown on many Russian TV channels. In the documentary serial *'Forgive and Good-bye the 20th Century'* made by the film director Savva Kulish there is a film about the Holocaust. Unfortunately, the film of the untimely demised director Mr. Kulish has not yet been shown in cinemas. A number of films closely related to the Holocaust theme were produced by the documentary maker Vladimir Dvinsky. His last work is a story of what was said about the 'final solution of the Jewish question' at the Nurenberg Trials and how the tragedy was presented there. The film *'Melodies of the Riga Ghetto'*, produced by the TV anchor V. Molchanov in 2005, aroused a great interest on the part of the TV audience and mass media. There is a film by Dmitry Astrakhan devoted to the tragedy of Jews in the Polish town of Kielce. At the MOSFILM studio, the filming of the 12-part TV serial based on A. Ribakov's novel *Heavy Sand* had been finished and the first performance of its movie-version was favorably greeted in Israel, in May of 2008.

Without doubt, it is these works of art that will be instrumental in familiarizing the younger generation with the facts about Holocaust. It should be noted that in recent years, some TV channels, including the state-owned, had greatly increased the number of foreign-made films about the Holocaust. Among them are *'The Pianist'*, *'Escape from Sobibor'*, *'The Belski Brothers'*, and other films. In 2008, the Russian TV took a new interest in the issue of Righteous among the Nations. The *Top Secret* cable TV channel gave two broadcasts: one dedicated to the deeds of Oscar Schindler and the other discussing the new documentary *'The Kiselyov List'* devoted to a guerilla detachment in the occupied Belarus saving over one hundred Jews taking them across the front.

However, not a single Russian picture about the Holocaust became a prize winner at any of the national film festivals. While in Ukraine, Sergey Bukovsky's documentary *'Spell Your Name'*, also based on video evidences from the Spielberg Foundation, was presented in the presence of the nation's leaders, in Russia, it is a rare occasion that well-known movie critics analyze Russian feature and documentary films dedicated to the Holocaust.

### **III. Research and educational projects**

The Holocaust history research in Russia has its traditions and specifics. In 1993, a unique edition, the *'Unknown Black Book'* prepared by the Yad Vashem Memorial Museum and the State Archive of the Russian Federation, was published in Moscow. The edition, collected by the Jewish Antifascist Committee, comprises evidences and documents that were not

included in the original 'Black Book'. Basically, they expose the role played by the collaborationist in extermination of Jews and bring into light instances of the local population not helping the Jews hiding from the Nazis.

In 2008 the *'Unknown Black Book'* was translated into English and published under the auspices of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. One of the editors of the book is Ilya Altman, co-chairman of the Holocaust Center.<sup>6</sup> In 1996, the Holocaust Center embarked on publishing *'The Russian Holocaust Library'* books series. Since then, over 40 books have been published including *'The History of the Holocaust on the USSR Territory'*, *'History of the Holocaust. 1933 – 1945'*, *'The Holocaust – Resistance – Revival'*, treatises on the history of the Lvov Jews and on denial of the Holocaust, memoirs of former Ghetto prisoners, and Resistance fighters and papers of international conferences (in Russian and in English). Memoirs of General Petrenko, who took part in the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, were republished in France.<sup>7</sup> A German-language schoolbook for schoolchildren was published in Austria.

Beginning in 1994, the Center has published 26 issues of the nonperiodical research and information bulletin *'The Holocaust'*. During last two years the bulletin has been published quarterly.

The Kovcheg Foundation, within the scope of the *'Anatomy of Holocaust'* publishing program under the academic advising of Michael Agroskin, has prepared the first in the world treatise on the Holocaust in the territory of the USSR under the title of *'Victims of Hatred'*.<sup>8</sup> The Foundation has also prepared and published treatises on the Holocaust in Germany and evidences of Russian citizens who survived imprisonment in the Nazi death camps. Many tens of books of foreign authors, including memoirs, were published by the *Text* publishers. These books are, for the most part, about the Holocaust beyond the boundaries of the former USSR. A number of regional Holocaust studies were issued in St. Petersburg, Smolensk, Taganrog and Orel. Memoirs of Ghetto prisoners were published in Yaroslavl, Samara and Moscow. A number of substantive books about Raoul Wallenberg and the reaction of the Soviet Government towards the facts of the Holocaust were written by Lev Bezimenski.

From 1994 through 2002, four international research conferences *'Lessons of the Holocaust and Contemporary Russia'* were held in Moscow. They were organized by the Holocaust Center under the auspices of the Council of Europe, RF Ministry of Education, Yad Vashem Memorial Museum and the S. Mikhoels Center. The keynote speeches at the conferences were published in Russian and English. However, these conferences and studies had but a slight effect on the basic studies related to the Great Patriotic

War. It is true, however, that in specialized treatises of a number of authors (including M.I. Semiryaga, B.A. Sokolov and B.N. Kovalyov) dealing with collaborationism and occupation regime there is information and even sections about the Holocaust. At the same time, in the voluminous generalizing study on the Great Patriotic War (1998), the Holocaust is not presented as a separate issue and the number of its victims among the USSR Jews is substantially lowered.

The new project of the Holocaust Center must change the situation: a fundamental investigation, the 'Encyclopedia of the Holocaust on the territory of the USSR' has been completed by leading Second World War researchers of Russia and all other post-Soviet states. This unique work will be published by the ROSSPEN publishers in 2009.

The most important way of preserving the memory of the Holocaust is to introduce the topic in academic programs of schools and universities. The Holocaust Center and the Holocaust Foundation have organized International Courses for schoolteachers and university professors. There is an on-campus and extra-mural departments the education certificates of which were received by over 800 teachers from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. About 480 people took part in summer terms in Brest, Kiev, Smolensk, St. Petersburg and other CIS cities. Every year, the best graduates are offered internship in the Jerusalem Yad Vashem and other museums of the world.

Over 1000 teachers from 62 Russian regions took part in 12 workshops organized by the Holocaust Foundation in cooperation with the Swedish Embassy and the Open Society Institute in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Rostov, Nizhny Novgorod, Vladivostok, Arkhangelsk, Kaliningrad, Smolensk, Perm and Vologda.

There was issued a twenty-six-thousand edition of *'The History of the Holocaust on the USSR territory'* schoolbook for schoolchildren carrying a recommendation from the Ministry of Education. In 2003, within the scope of the Federal Target Program 'Formation of tolerant attitudes', the teachers' and students' guide *'History of the Holocaust and of Jewish Resistance on the Occupied Territory of the USSR'* was published together with methodological programs and texts for the lessons.

The section 'Holocaust in the USSR' was prepared for the Swedish book on the History of the Holocaust and for the study guide for the Open University of Israel.

The fact that Russia is not a member of the Task Force and doesn't show due interest in its activities has a negative effect on how teachers are trained and what attitude the state educational bodies have toward the problem.

There is also another educational project on the Holocaust that Russia was the first to embark upon: under the auspices of the Center and the Foundation, two all-Russia and five international contests of works presented by teachers, schoolchildren and students from 60 regions of Russia and 15 foreign countries were held. Beginning in 2004, the student winners of the contest have been presenting their works before the UNESCO General Headquarters and the works are published in special collections.

The annual Holocaust conferences held in Brest have become the most important way of preserving the memory about the war and the Holocaust. On the stroke of four in the morning, every June 22, the participants of the Conference gather at the legendary Brest fortress. They meet with former Ghetto prisoners and the Righteous among the Nations and they take care of the Beds of Honor. Speeches of the participants of the Conferences and of the contest winners are published in the Center's and the Foundation's papers and pedagogical press. Beginning in 2007, the university students who visited Brest when they were still schoolchildren, hold conferences in Volgograd named 'The Holocaust: Memory and Warning'.

#### **IV. Memorial sites: memorialization of the Holocaust victims with monuments, tombstone and museums**

According to the different estimates, on the occupied by the Nazis territory within the boundaries of today's Russia (i.e. without the Crimea), 55 to 70 thousand<sup>9</sup> or up to 140 thousand<sup>10</sup> Soviet Jews have perished. Jews were exterminated in every Russian republic, krai and oblast that were seized by the Nazis, altogether, in twenty two administrative regions. However, as to the number of sites where the monuments to the victims of the Holocaust were erected, Russia is far behind its neighbors. By the early 1990s, a lot of volunteers in different cities gave their time and energy to the cause of the Holocaust remembrance. Beginning in the mid-1990s, a volunteer Holocaust study group appeared in St. Petersburg. They went to a number of northwest and central Russian oblasts to record oral evidences of eyewitnesses. Then they released 'The Smolensk Babi Yars' documentary and, in the town of Pushkin erected a monument to the Holocaust victims (sculptor V. Sidur). They also organize annual rallies memorizing the day when the Jews of the town were shot.

At the suggestions of relatives of the perished and the leaders of local Jewish communities, monuments and memorial signs were built in Nevel (in the early 1990s), Taganrog (in 1996 and 2001), Pskov (in 2003), Stavropol (in 2004), Kaliningrad (in 2002), Kursk (in 2002), Elista (in 2000) and some

other places. During the last ten years, thanks to the efforts of the professor of the Smolensk Pedagogical Institute Michael Steklov, who is the leader of the regional Holocaust Center, and with the assistance of the Smolensk Jewish community and local administration, about ten commemorative plaques, signs and monuments were put up and expositions in the local museums of regional studies were opened. In the Smolensk oblast town of Velizh, the teacher of history at the local school A. Bordugov collected the names of most of his perished Jewish fellow-townsmen, and in 2008 a commemorative plaque was put up at the place where the Ghetto was burnt down. In the village of Dubrovka, the Bryansk oblast, and village of Ivnya, the Belgorod oblast, teachers of local schools Tatyana Zhukova and Lubov Lisenko were the initiators of building monuments to the perished Jews.

In 2002, in the town of Lyubavichi, the Smolensk oblast, a memorial sign, at the place where the Jews were executed, was erected by the members of the Holocaust Foundation's Youth Center together with German and Austrian students. In 2005, in the Pskov oblast, there was a tombstone erected on the grave of the righteous woman Pelageya Grigoryeva.

In 2008, the RJC in cooperation with the Center and the Holocaust Foundation and under the auspices of the European Jewish Foundation, embarked on the project called 'Babi Yars of Russia'. The presentation of the project took place on June 20, 2008 in the news agency RIA Novosty.<sup>11</sup> The project's main task is to facilitate the erection of monuments in places of execution. On the dedicated Website at [www.holomemory.ru](http://www.holomemory.ru) information about nearly 500 places of execution within the boundaries of today's Russian territory can be found.

Grave sites have to be set in order, duly registered under the provisions of Russian law, and taken under protection. The project will make it possible for us to fulfill our duty to the perished: to erect monuments in the places where they died and to take care of them. One of the tasks of the project is to join together, for a common cause, people who are ready to take part and those who are already taking part in various activities: some are setting grave sites in order, others are financing the work and still others are collecting information for museums. Via the Website, people from all over the world can get in touch with each other directly without having to go through any bureaucratic red tape. They can find out who is taking care of the graves of their near and dear ones.

The project provides for close cooperation of all research and public organizations in Russia and abroad, local authorities, museums of regional studies, school and university teachers and other persons involved.

The novelty of the project consists in that the erection of a monument or a memorial sign is an important but not the final phase of the undertaking. What is most important is to preserve the historical memory of the Holocaust. That will be possible only when in a school museum or in local museums of regional studies there will be a relevant exposition and the pupils of local schools will charge themselves taking care of the memorial site.

The project managers expect that museum personnel, teachers, students and all other persons concerned will actively participate in collecting new information about places where Jews were killed and about the history of commemoration of these places, as well as in collecting photographs of the monuments to the perished and of the commemorative events. An important role in the project is assigned to Jewish communities.

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In conclusion, we will dwell on the main upcoming trend in the preservation of the historical memory of the Holocaust in Russia.

Firstly, the Holocaust subject can be widely taught in schools and universities, included in state standards and programs for training history and literature teachers, as it is done, for instance in Ukraine and Lithuania. The Holocaust subject must also be present in programs and textbooks for the humanities departments of universities and for teachers training colleges.

Secondly, a state museum that would serve as an educational center for the history of the Holocaust must be opened. Its goals are: presenting the Holocaust tragedy within a wide historical context of universal value for the many peoples of our country; exposing the sources and consequences of the propaganda and implementation of ideas of racial exclusiveness and hatred which led to the tragedy of many nations and millions of victims. The future museum must indicate ways of moral and ethical opposition to any manifestations of ethnic genocide and, basing on the leading-edge technologies, to serve the cause of tolerance and mutual understanding in contemporary Russia. Equally important is to reflect the Holocaust theme in the expositions of museums of local studies. Formation of such a center under the auspices of government institutions, will promote the image of Russia as being a civilized and a democratic nation.

Thirdly, there should be a state-run program for memorialization of all the places of mass extermination of Jews on the territory of Russia.

Fourthly, there should be international cooperation of students and schoolchildren, joint visits of the Holocaust sites in Russia and abroad, international conferences and contests.

All these activities will make it possible for the civil society to prevent burying in oblivion the memory of one of the most terrible tragedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Холокост: история и память. // Под редакцией Томаша Крауса. (Kraus, Томбль, ed. Holocaust: History and Memory [In Russian and Hungarian]. Budapest: Magyar Ruzsisztikai Intezser, 2006). Ed. Gabriel Finder, Natalia Aleksiuun, Antony Polonsky and Jan Schwartz. Making Holocaust memory. The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, Oxford, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g.: *Альтман И.* Мемориализация Холокоста в России: история, современность, перспективы // *Неприкосновенный запас*, № 2-3, (40–41), 2005. С. 252–263

<sup>3</sup> The Center brings together about 200 Russian professional scientists, journalists, public figures, teachers and students of different ethnic background. A lot of notable scientists and public figures agreed to join the Management of the Center and its Community Board. In June 1992, Russia's outstanding historian and philosopher Mikhail Gefter (1918-1995) was elected President of the Holocaust Center. At present, the Center is headed by Alla Gerber, writer and journalist, Deputy of the 5th State Duma, member of the Public Chamber, and Dr. Ilya Altman, historian and archivist. Branches and regional delegations were opened in twelve Russian cities, in Belarus, Ukraine and Israel. Beginning in 1994, the Center is a member of the International Association of Holocaust Organizations.

<sup>4</sup> Its unchallenged leaders are Alla Gerber and Ilya Altman. The Foundation has gathered items and documents from Russian, USA, Israeli and German citizens comprising several tens of private collections and twelve documentary files (among them are "History of Jews in Russia/USSR", "Jews who fought in the Great Patriotic War" and "The History of Holocaust and the Resistance").

<sup>5</sup> It should be mentioned that initially the construction of the Memorial Synagogue put forward by the Russian Jewish Congress did not provide for arranging any kind of exhibit there. At the press conference on the laying the cornerstone of the Synagogue, the RJC President Vladimir Gusinsky, responding to the question: "Will there be a museum there?" gave a remarkable answer: "I have no money for the Holocaust." A half a year before the Synagogue was opened the issue had been brought into focus by the Mayor of Moscow Mr. Luzhkov and subsequently settled through joint efforts of the Historical Museum Center and the Holocaust Foundation.

<sup>6</sup> *The Unknown Black Book*. Edited by Joshua Rubinstein and Ilya Altman // Indiana University Press, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> General Vasily Petrenko. *Devant et après Auschwitz*. Paris, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> *Альтман И.* Жертвы ненависти. Холокост в СССР. 1941–1945. М.: Совершенно секретно, 2002. 545 с.

<sup>9</sup> *Арад Ицхак.* Катастрофа евреев на оккупированных территориях Советского Союза (1941–1945). Днепропетровск – М.: Ткума, центр «Холокост», 2007. С. 798.

<sup>10</sup> *Альтман И. А.* Жертвы ненависти. Холокост в СССР. 1941–1945. М.: Совершенно секретно. С. 286.

<sup>11</sup> See: «Еврейские новости». Июнь 2008. № 19. С. 2.

UKRAINIAN SOCIETY AND THE MEMORY  
OF THE HOLOCAUST:  
ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM

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The theme presented in the heading of this article is quite complicated and far from being unambiguous for Ukrainian society. In my opinion, it constitutes a part of two major problems of the contemporary intellectual discourse not only among the humanitarian intelligentsia but among the entire Ukrainian society. The first problem which appears to me as fundamental is the painful process of framing Ukrainian society's historical memory and its models and culture, the creation of the paradigm of its own national history, and – as is the case – the place that the Holocaust occupies in memory and in history. The second problem closely bound with the first one is the place the Jewish heritage, the Ukrainian-Jewish relations and the Jewish culture as a whole occupy in today's concept of Ukrainian history and historiography, and in the historical self-awareness of Ukrainian society. The problem over which society is agonizing could be stated as follows: does the Jewish history and culture, which had existed and developed in the Ukrainian land for centuries, constitute the integral part of Ukrainian culture? "They lived among us" was said about the Ukrainian Jews at one of the few public intellectual discussions on Ukrainian-Jewish relations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>1</sup>

Within the range of these problems, and being challenged by not a simple question of whether the Holocaust history and the tragic fate of Jews under the Nazis comprise the integral part of the common history of Ukrainians and Jews and the history of Ukraine during World War Two, I will try to analyze some aspects of the theme defined as 'Ukrainian Society and the Memory of the Holocaust'. I would identify the three following aspects: the research and academic, the pedagogical (or educational) and the sociopolitical one. Though

it is clear that these aspects often overlap since they are closely interrelated, nevertheless, each of them has its own specific features. By examining them separately and in a coordinated fashion we will be able to comprehend the range of the problems in their totality.

During the time elapsed from the early 1990s, fairly much has been done in the field of the history of the Ukrainian Holocaust studies. The fundamental difference between the Ukrainian historiography and the Soviet one is that in Ukraine this theme has become a separate topic of study and that, in Ukraine, there began the process of forming a scientific approach to the history of the Holocaust in Ukraine, the fact that has been mentioned before more than once.<sup>2</sup> The present author does not aim at analyzing the achievement of the Ukrainian Holocaust historiography which went all the way from local historical studies and memoirs to generalizing papers on various aspects, publication of major collections of documents<sup>3</sup> and presentations of research theses, which are still regrettably few.<sup>4</sup> According to the leading liberal Ukrainian historian J. Gritsak, in the current decade, the Ukrainian historical research must be conducted under the sign of studying Ukrainian-Jewish relations during the years of the Nazi occupation.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the Ukrainian historiography of the Holocaust did establish itself as a science discipline and continues, though not without difficulties, to develop as such. A good indication of this is the increase in the number of references to publications and research papers on the subject issued in Ukraine.<sup>6</sup>

In the present paper, we will try to analyze to what extent these studies have affected the historical research as a whole in Ukraine and the attitude towards the Holocaust subject on the part of the authorities and society. At this point, we must take note of a simple, though, strange phenomenon: while our international colleagues engaged in the study of the Holocaust history in Ukraine<sup>7</sup> show interest in the works of the Ukrainian historians on the subject, these works go almost unnoticed by the national established scientific community and, to a certain extent, occupy a marginal place in the national historiography.

In my opinion, the pertinacious drawing the veil of silence over these studies becomes progressively consistent and, for that matter, more aggressive. In scholarly works on the contemporary Ukrainian history and in historiography textbooks for universities published in 2003 through 2004, the Babiy Yar is only but mentioned and the numbers of victims are set in the following order: Ukrainians, Russian, Jews... In historiography reviews for the history departments of universities, treatises and publications related to the subject of genocide of the Ukrainian Jews during the period of the

Nazi occupation were disregarded downright.<sup>8</sup> During the last two years, the attitude of the established scientific community towards the Jewish victims of World War Two in Ukraine and, in general, to all other minority-ethnic-groups victims of the War has not changed at all and the victims are being completely disregarded. More astounding in this respect is the last academic tome dedicated to the political history of Ukraine during the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries published by the Institute of History and the Institute for Political and Ethno-national Studies under the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.<sup>9</sup> This huge folio of over one thousand pages created by a team of renowned and respected Ukrainian historians is devoted to the most important events in the nation's history over the last hundred years. One of the central parts of the treatise comprised of four sections is dedicated to events on the territory of Ukraine during World War Two. Not a word about the fate of the Ukrainian Jews during the Nazi occupation can be found in this part of the book. The attitude to the Holocaust Studies on the part of the authors of one-volume and multivolume academic publications on the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of Ukraine went all the way from desultory mentions in academic publications five years ago to virtually total exclusion of the Holocaust subjects from the publications of the recent two years.

These publications actually represent only the concept of monocultural or even monoethnic historical development of Ukraine, although it is generally known that in Ukrainian historical studies a multicultural approach to Ukraine's history and culture is developing.<sup>10</sup> In this approach, the history of ethnic minorities, including the Jews, is perceived as an integral part of Ukrainian history. It is this approach that is prevalent today in the European historiography and is very common in the post-Soviet space. It is hard to understand the reasons and the rationale behind the insistent reluctance of the authors of the major study of Ukraine's political history, as well as of many university textbooks, to see a Jewish face, together with other faces for that matter, in Ukraine's history. While ten years ago the excuse was the after-effects of the Soviet stereotypes in historiography, the Soviet-era taboo against Jewish Studies, etc., nowadays such justification of a monocultural and monoethnic approach to the history of Ukraine is superficial, to say the least. In my opinion, the main reason here is different: it is the failure or reluctance to see and interpret the national history as a multicultural one, let alone the Jewish component in it. One can sense the tendency in it of excluding from the national history the image of the "different". The "different" is inherently viewed as the "alien". Apparently, a lot of historians feel more comfortable and at ease when referring to "our" and "their": "our

Holodomor” and “their Holocaust”.<sup>11</sup> Thereby, a definite model of historical memory is being formed, a model in which the Holocaust has nothing whatsoever to do with the national history. Thus, the Ukrainian context of the Holocaust has remained, on the whole, unknown to the public, and what is more unfortunate, unknown and incomprehensible to the Ukrainian youth.<sup>12</sup> The outcome of this kind of policy regarding the preservation of remembrance about the past is that within society there forms a view that the Holocaust took place in other European countries, while Ukraine has nothing to do with it. Virtually disregarded are numerous findings of the international and of Ukrainian, for that matter, historiography pointing to the generally known and unquestioned fact that the first victims of the German occupation in Ukraine, as well as in other European countries, were the Jews.<sup>13</sup> What is more, some Ukrainian historians have recently begun to extend the notion of the Holocaust to the events of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine. Applying the phrase ‘*the Ukrainian Holocaust*’ to the Holodomor does not only prevent the formation of an objective historical memory, but leads to an outright falsification of history. (The discussion concerning the strange term ‘the Ukrainian Holocaust’ will be dealt with below when we examine the sociopolitical aspect of the problem.) Putting aside the fact that it was the Jews who were the victims of the Holocaust, the Ukrainian policy follows, to a certain extent, the Soviet culture of memory of the World War Two victims.<sup>14</sup>

However, as was mentioned above, there are two different tendencies in the historical memory of the Holocaust in Ukrainian society. One of them is the entire or partial hushing up the tragedy or presenting it as something foreign to and not being part of the national history narrative. Such kind of a tendency (or strategy) is a particular case of the more general monocultural approach to Ukrainian history as a whole. The other tendency – when discussing the scientific aspect of the Holocaust memory in Ukrainian society – is the multicultural approach in which the Holocaust events in the land of Ukraine are seen as an integral part of the History of Ukraine during World War Two and the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. This tendency is reflected in the works of Ukrainian historians living in Ukraine and abroad, as well as of our international colleagues studying the history of the War in Ukraine and, specifically, the Holocaust history in the Ukrainian context.<sup>15</sup> This second approach, unlike the ‘monocultural’ one, mostly finds support among liberal historians, some independent humanities periodicals and non-governmental research and educational organizations,<sup>16</sup> and receives very little or no encouragement at all from the many state agencies and institutions. In such a

situation, it is pointless to speculate about what tendency of the two prevails and has more effect on Ukrainian society: dominant is the tendency of forcing the Holocaust, as part of Ukrainian history, out of the memory of the nation.<sup>17</sup>

The scientific aspect of such an approach, characteristic of a large part of contemporary Ukrainian historiography toward the problem under consideration, is tightly bound with the political aspect of preserving in Ukrainian society the memory of the Holocaust, and it, surely, affects the teaching of this topic in contemporary Ukraine. (A possible cause of the situation may be the subordinate role of scientific research which serves or attends to certain political needs characteristic of totalitarian and post-totalitarian post-communist societies.)

The pedagogical aspect of the problem under consideration is, in my opinion, no less important than the scientific studies on the Holocaust history. It is through well balanced and sensible teaching of the topic that we have a chance to transmit to and preserve for the future generations the memory of the fate of Ukrainian Jewry.

It appears relevant to begin with a brief look at the genesis and development of teaching the Holocaust topic in Ukraine. There are two facets of the subject: the formal education and the informal education. Of course, they are interrelated. In the realm of formal education, beginning in mid-1990s, the subject was officially included in high school core training programs for History of Ukraine and World History. However, in the academic time schedule, there was not even one lesson fully dedicated to the Holocaust: the topic was included in a more general subject of 'the Nazi occupational regime' with only one hour allocated for it in the curriculum. In 2000, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine advised universities to introduce a dedicated course of the history of the Holocaust in Europe and Ukraine. Apparently, it was the outcome of the 2000 Stockholm Holocaust conference where Ukraine acceded to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. Beginning in 2006, in test papers for high school final exams there appeared questions on the Holocaust history. Therefore, technically, the authorities represented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine had fully legitimized the teaching of the Holocaust subject by not just permitting it but by including it in the official curricula. Unfortunately, there is no actual possibility to teach the Holocaust history within the framework of the formal secondary education (i.e., in high schools) in Ukraine. Ironically, the Soviet tradition of hushing up the Holocaust history in Ukraine is still alive here. While in the Soviet textbooks nothing whatsoever was said about the

extermination of Jews, in most of the Ukrainian textbooks prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Holocaust is mentioned without any reference to the national history.<sup>18</sup>

There are two causes working together here: 1) while in the history curriculum there are references to the Holocaust, no teaching hours are dedicated to the topic; and 2) in most of the existing textbooks there is no consistently provided information on the Holocaust history that would be incorporated in the curriculum for the national history course and present the Holocaust as an integral part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Ukrainian history.

Actually, the curriculum in force requires only mentioning the Holocaust, and a teacher in a classroom may limit himself to it. Accordingly, the Holocaust is presented as an event having nothing to do with the History of Ukraine.<sup>19</sup> The educational supervisor and history textbook reviewer Yuri Komarov made a special comparative study between the ways the Holocaust is presented in Ukrainian, German and UK's textbooks. Technically, if we ask schoolchildren whether the Babiy Yar has any relation to the Holocaust, the answer most probably would be negative.<sup>20</sup> Professor Elena Ivanova from Kharkov, who investigated the perception of the Holocaust by Ukrainian schoolchildren, came to a conclusion that for them "the Jewish Holocaust remains an abstract and foreign event having no whatsoever relation to the national memory".<sup>21</sup>

However, there is another pedagogical facet of forming the memory of the Holocaust within Ukrainian society: it is the informal education which has developed considerably over the past ten-odd years, and during the recent two years has begun to notably affect the awareness of Ukrainian society or, at least, of some part of it (including schoolchildren, students, teachers and even the scientific community) about their responsibility for preserving the memory of that history. In her study, Ms. E. Ivanova writes that in the absence of any clearly defined formal education in the subject, the possibility of acquiring information about the Ukrainian context of the Holocaust from alternative sources assumes great significance. Teachers obtain this information partaking in a variety of informal types of education related to the teaching of the Holocaust history in post-Soviet Ukraine.

Informal training in the Holocaust subject is mainly provided by non-governmental research and educational organizations.<sup>22</sup> Over the last ten years, they have managed to introduce, virtually without any help on the part of the governmental structures, a well-defined system for teaching the Holocaust history that started, gradually, to positively influence the formal education. Jewish, vocational, academic and pedagogical non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) hold numerous training and tutorial workshops for school and university teachers, they publish research and teaching literature, initiate creativity contests for schoolchildren and students, organize summer schools and offer internships at the Holocaust study centers in different parts of the world.

Teachers who have taken part in such NGOs projects, as a rule, use in their regular work a variety of teaching material well beyond the scope of the official curricula and textbooks. In his study, Mr. Komarov notes that “[...] Within the framework of the teaching programs and textbooks in force, there are only very limited possibilities for teaching the Holocaust subject, should the teacher confine himself to the curricula and textbooks alone (which is the norm for the vast majority of teachers). Yet, a teacher who really wants to teach the Holocaust subject is not officially banned from doing so. The obstacles are different: no teaching material, no study time, etc. Surely, these difficulties can be overcome by using, for instance, the material from the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies and numerous Internet sources, provided the teacher has the will and the means, which are not always in abundance, especially in remote places”.<sup>23</sup>

In an attempt to summarize the state’s attitude to the subject, I may note that while, unlike the Soviet times, there is no taboo for teaching the Holocaust history, there is no state policy that would facilitate it either. All the progress achieved over the last decade in the realm of preserving, through education, the memory of the Holocaust as a part of the nation’s history is the result, in the vast majority of cases, of the activities of non-governmental research and educational organizations. Working with financial support from international foundations and institutions they aim their projects at studying the Holocaust history and promoting interethnic tolerance in Ukraine.

The European approach to the Holocaust history studies proceeds from the premise that the subject is of universal importance. Nowadays, it is common practice to bring up the young in interethnic and interconfessional tolerance, in non-admission of xenophobia, discrimination or racism of any kind. It is the studying of the Holocaust history as an unprecedented, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interethnic non-tolerance that is instrumental in such upbringing. Projects based on this concept are implemented by Ukrainian NGOs in cooperation with the Anne Frank Museum, the Netherland government, Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research,<sup>24</sup> OSCE and other institutions. These projects don’t attract any adequate attention on the part of the state. Accordingly, all the responsibility for their results lies with Ukrainian NGOs.

Finally, I would like to dwell upon the sociopolitical aspect of forming the memory of the Holocaust. It is necessary to point out that, in a sense, both the scientific and the pedagogical elements of preserving the memory of the Ukrainian Jewry's fate in the years of Nazism and World War Two are the component parts of the political aspect of the problem under consideration, since, to a greater or less degree, they get society and the state to somehow respond to the problem. I will try to shed some light on the Ukrainian policy regarding the memory of the Holocaust and to find out whether it is a clearly defined policy or there exists only some extension of the Soviet traditions of remembrance which never emphasized the Jewish victims of World War Two.

I would like to draw attention to the memorialization of the Holocaust and to public debates around it.

As a matter of fact, there is no state policy on putting up memorial plaques at places of mass execution of the Ukrainian Jews, which would preserve the memory of the Holocaust in Ukraine. In my opinion, the only reason for it is the one discussed above: there is no understanding among the authorities and society as a whole that the Holocaust is part of the history of Ukraine, i.e., their own history. More often we encounter a pattern of judgment, or rather of prejudice, that it is "their", Jewish, history and tragedy, so let "them" decide for themselves how to preserve their own memory. The outcome is an astounding situation which is impossible to accept for those to whom the memory of the past is a meaningful reminder for the present and future generations. For instance, a dignified state memorial monument to the perished is still waiting to be erected. Despite the fact that in 2000 Ukraine acceded to the Stockholm Declaration, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, is not marked in any way at the state level. There are no state Holocaust history museums in Ukraine. Alternatively, almost in every part of the country there are memorial plaques and monuments in places of former Ghettos or where Jews had been executed, that were built thanks to the efforts of and donations from Jewish communities, NGOs and private citizens.<sup>25</sup> Regretfully, the state authorities assume no responsibility regarding the safety and protection of these monuments.

Today, among Ukrainian society there are no, but with a few exceptions, debates on the Holocaust as a part of their own history. Instead, unfortunately and regretfully, there is "the competition of victims"<sup>26</sup> when the so called "researchers" count the number of people perished in the Holodomor as being greater than that of the Holocaust victims... The term "Ukrainian Holocaust"<sup>27</sup> which is generally recognized as meaning total genocide of Ukrainian Jews during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine is falsely applied

to the Holodomor. In his study of the disappeared West Ukrainian Jewish communities, the historian Omer Bartov notes that the monuments in places of mass extermination of Jews are forced to the margin of the public memory. After the year of 1991, prevailing in the region are monuments and museums dedicated to the heroes of OUN and URA. With public visual memorialization of the Ukrainian Holodomor victims and glorification of war-time rebels, other ‘stories’ of that historical period, the Holocaust above all, fade away to the background. At times, one has the impression that national memory monuments are being built over the structure of the war-time history of Jews in order to bury in oblivion the other “victim people”.<sup>28</sup>

Ukrainian policy concerning the memory of the Holocaust – or absence of any such policy – obscures the fact that it was the Jews who were the Holocaust victims. The German historian Wilfried Ilge draws attention to the ironic consequence of an information gap about the Ukrainian context of the Holocaust: the outcome of the hushing up does not only leave out the “unpleasant facts” but it also overlooks the numerous instances of self-sacrificing Ukrainians saving Jews. Therefore, focusing the attention of Ukrainian historiography on a one-ethnic state and the monoethnic image of history (i.e., presenting the history of Ukraine as the history of ethnic Ukrainians alone, ignoring the cultural contribution of ethnic minorities) entails silence or lack of information concerning the Ukrainian-Jewish relations during the years of the Nazi occupation and hinders overcoming the prejudices and stereotypes of “Ukrainians being anti-Semites”.<sup>29</sup>

What is the way out of the memory-of-the-past dead-end where Ukrainian society and the country as a whole still find themselves in? Apparently, we have to give up the totalitarian model and culture of memory which reduce the reality to a black-and-white world devoid of any in-between tints whatsoever. Perhaps, what we need now is an open and pointed debate on the subject. We also need political will to realize that the “different” is not inherently “alien” but just different. The aforementioned Wilfried Ilge must be right when he writes that alignment of different war experiences (Ukrainian, Jewish, Crimean Tatar, Polish, Soviet, etc.) would do more for interethnic consolidation than the formal statements offering us the “truthful” image of history.<sup>30</sup> Any of those experiences are fraught with divided memories that bring about unambiguity, aggressiveness, lack of tolerance today and even more dangerous intolerance in the foreseeable future.

The way out lies in possessing knowledge of history, in reconciliation, conscientious comparison and responsibility in general. The German historian Guido Knopp<sup>31</sup> wrote that the Holocaust existed in German history and

in his own history as well, and that we all are responsible for our own history. What is more important is that we are responsible not for the past but for the memory of the past...

It is this kind of responsibility that Ukrainian society really needs today.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The discussion took place in the columns of the liberal Ukrainian humanitarian magazine 'Kritika', 2005, Nos. 4, 5, 9 and 10. Sofia Gracheva, Yaroslav Gritsak, Marko Tsarinnik, Ivan Khimka and Zhanna Kovba took part in the discussion.

<sup>2</sup> *Подольський А.* Тема Голокосту в сучасній українській історіографії: проблеми наукових досліджень та інтерпретацій// Друга світова війна і доля народів України: Матеріали Всеукраїнської наукової конференції. К.: Сфера, 2005. С. 32–34; *Подольський А.* Дослідження з історії Голокосту в сучасній українській історіографії: нові підходи// Катастрофа і опір українського єврейства: Нариси з історії Голокосту і Опору в Україні. К., 1999. С. 26–38.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance: *Попович М.* Еврейский геноцид на Украине// Философская и социологическая мысль. № 4. 1994; *Грицак Я.* Українці в антиєврейських акціях під час Другої світової війни// Часопис «І». Львів, 1996; *Хонигсман Я.* Катастрофа єврейства Західної України. Львів, 1998; *Винокурова Ф.* Особенности геноцида евреев на территории Транснистрии// Холокост и современность. №№ 4-6. 2003–2004; *Гон М.* З кривдою на самоті. Українсько-єврейські взаємини на Волині в 1926 – 1939 роках. Рівне, 2005; *Tyaglyu M.* Were Chingene Victims of the Holocaust? The Nazi policy in the Crimea towards Roma and Jews: Comparative analysis // Holocaust and Genocide Studies Fall. 2008; *Царинник М.* Золочів мовчить// Критика. № 8. 2005; *Ковба Ж.* Людяність у безодні пекла. К., 1998; *Левітас Ф.* Євреї України в роки Другої світової війни. К., 1997; Сборник документов и материалов об уничтожении нацистами евреев Украины в 1941–1944 гг. / *Круглов А.*, ред. К.: Институт иудаики, 2002; *Тяглый М.* Места массового уничтожения евреев Крыма в период нацистской оккупации полуострова, 1941–1944: Справочник. Симферополь, 2005; Катастрофа і опір українського єврейства: Нариси з історії Голокосту і Опору в Україні. К., 1999.

<sup>4</sup> During the 1991 – 2008 period, only six research theses on the Holocaust were defended in Ukraine. Among the authors are: A. Podolsky, F. Levitas, F. Vinokurova, A. Goncharenko, O. Surovtsev and N. Sugatskaya. The theses by M. Gon, V. Grinevich and D. Titarenko were also partly related to the history of the Holocaust in Ukraine.

<sup>5</sup> *Грицак Я.* Украинская историография: десятилетие перемен// Ab Imperio. № 3. 2003.

<sup>6</sup> International researchers of the Holocaust history mostly refer to collections of documents, including: *Бабий Яр: человек, власть, история: Документы и материалы. Т.1 / Общественный комитет по увековечению памяти жертв Бабьего Яра и др.* Ред.-сост. В. Нахманович К.: Внешторгиздат, 2004; Сборник документов и материалов об уничтожении нацистами евреев Украины в 1941–1944 гг. / *Круглов А.*, ред. К.: Институт иудаики, 2002; и др.

<sup>7</sup> Among them, we must first mention the Dutch historian Karl Berkhoff, the German historian Dieter Pohl, the USA historian Omer Bartov, the Canadian historians Peter Potichny, Howard Aster, Mark Tsarinnik and John Khimka, the USA historians Alexander Prusin, Martin Dean and Wendy Lower and the German historian Wilfried Ilge.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance respective section in: *Калакура Я.* Українська історіографія. К., 2004; *Політична історія України 20 століття. Т. 4. Україна в роки Другої світової війни (1939-1945).* Керівник тому В. *Кучер.* К., 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Україна: політична історія 20 – початок 21 століття / Редрада: В.М. Литвин (голова) та ін. Редкол.: В.А. Смолій, Ю.А. Левенець (співголови) та ін. К.: Парламентське вид-во, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, university textbooks on Ukrainian History by Yaroslav Gritsak and Natalya Yakovenko.

<sup>11</sup> For example, on June 19, 2008, at the Ukrainian House in Kiev there was held the presentation of the Ukrainian translation of Alain Besancon's *A Century of Horrors: Communism, Nazism, and the Uniqueness of the Shoah*. The renowned Ukrainian historian Professor Yuri Shapoval said in his speech that it was very important to make the knowledge about our Ukrainian Holocaust (referring to the Holodomor tragedy) known to the European public.

<sup>12</sup> Їльге В. Змагання жертв // Критика. № 5. 2006.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance: *Pohl D. Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941–1944. Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens*. München: Oldenbourg, 1997. 453 S.

<sup>14</sup> Їльге В., *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Barkan E., Cole E., Struve K.* (eds.). *Shared History-Divided Memory. Jews & others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939–1941*. Leipziger Universitätsverlag GMBH, 2007; *Ray Brandon R., Lower W.* (eds.). *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization*. Indiana University Press, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Among others, I would first name magazine *Kritika*, Congress of Ethnic Communities of Ukraine, Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies and *Nova Doba* association of history teachers.

<sup>17</sup> It must be noted here that there is no denial of the Holocaust history or any prohibition of its study. There is, rather, forcing the theme out of the narrative of the World War Two history on the territory of Ukraine and out of the range of problems related to genocides that took place in the Ukrainian lands, or ignoring the theme; it is the examining of the Holocaust theme as something foreign to Ukrainian history and including it, though up to a point, only in the framework of the World or European history.

<sup>18</sup> Їльге В., *ibid.*; *Иванова Е.* Конструирование коллективной памяти о Холокосте в Украине // *Ab Imperio*. № 2. 2004; *Турченко Ф.* Новітня історія України. Частина перша 1917–1945. К., 1994.

<sup>19</sup> See *Иванова О.*, *ibid.*; *Комаров Ю.* Формальні можливості: місце теми Голокосту в навчальних курсах МОН України // Інформаційно-педагогічний Бюлетень Українського центру вивчення історії Голокосту «Уроки Голокосту». №2 (14). 2008.

<sup>20</sup> *Комаров Ю.*, *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Иванова Е.*, *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Among others, I would name the *Babi Yar Committee*, Congress of Ethnic Communities of Ukraine, Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies, *Nova Doba* association of history teachers and *Tkuma Center*. A lot of the Holocaust-related activities are carried out under the auspices of the *Euro-Asian Jewish Congress*.

<sup>23</sup> *Комаров Ю.*, *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research was started in 1998 under the auspices of Council of Europe.

<sup>25</sup> I would like to underscore the role played by volunteers who usually rely only on their own abilities. In this respect, I will mention two of my acquaintances and colleagues. With direct involvement of Boris Gidalevich, twenty-odd memorial plaques for the Odessa and Transnistria perished Jews were put up. The teacher from Lvov Ilya Kabanchik put up, all by himself, tens of memorial plaques in Galicia, Volhynia and Podolia. Never did these selfless men get any help from the state for doing what was its immediate duty.

<sup>26</sup> Їльге В., *ibid.*; *Дитч Й.* Поборюючи «Нюрнберзьку історіографію» Голодомору // *Голокост і сучасність: Науковий часопис Українського центру вивчення історії Голокосту*.

№ 1(3). 2008; *Кульчицький С.* Голодомор в Україні й український Голокост // Голокост і сучасність: Науковий часопис Українського центру вивчення історії Голокосту. № 1(3). 2008.

<sup>27</sup> *Кульчицький С.*, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Їльге В.*, *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Комаров Ю.*, *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Їльге В.*, *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Г. Кноп.* Холокост. Харьков, 2006.

## THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN JEWS IN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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Bismarck's view that the Prussian schoolmaster was a real architect of German unification is still topical: it is at school that most people get their knowledge about the world. To find out how particular events are presented to schoolchildren we have analyzed textbooks published after 1991 that were approved or recommended for teaching in the country's high schools by the RF Ministry of Education.

An earlier attempt of such an analysis was made in 1976 when it was supposed to be presented at the Moscow symposium, which was never held, "Jewish culture in the USSR: the present state and prospects" (Klal Israel. 2007). In the report "Jews in the high-school curriculum of world and Russian history", prepared for the symposium by Daniel Fish, it is said that the number of references to Jews in the Soviet textbooks had been steadily decreasing till they were only mentioned among the first peoples who had embraced Christianity (Fish. P. 318). E. Luboshits, in his report that was also prepared for the symposium and published in the samizdat magazine "Jews in the USSR", examined the approach of Soviet historians to the history of Russian-Jewish relations. The author stated that "almost all the facts and problems related to the history of Russian-Jewish relations in the past are only vaguely mentioned or altogether sidestepped in today's Soviet official historical literature" (Luboshits. P. 318).

The problem of the hushing up of Jewish history in school textbooks is examined in the article "Apophysis or judenfrei" by V. Cherny (Cherny. 1995). Other authors also wrote about the deliberate disregard of the historical and cultural heritage of the Jewish people and of their contribution to the treasure house of world civilization (Stolov. 1998).

Over the past ten years, the situation has improved: Jews have appeared on the pages of school textbooks, which is evidenced by the analysis of dozens of books on the history of Russia and the Soviet Union.

These publications can be tentatively divided into three groups:

I. The ones where Jews are not mentioned at all;

II. The ones where there are some references;

III. The ones where the Jewish issue is touched upon to some extent or other.

**I. A. N. Sakharov, V. I. Buganov *History of Russia from the earliest times till the late 17th century. Part I*** (Sakharov, Buganov. P. I. 1995); **E. V. Pchelov *History of Russia of the 17th and 18th centuries*** (Pchelov. 2007); **L. M. Lyaschenko *History of Russia. The 19th century*** (Lyaschenko. 1998). A total absence of the Jewish subject in these textbooks can be attributed to the Soviet tradition deep-seated for decades, as well as to the fact that up to the second half of the 18th century, Jewish stories in the history of the Russian Empire were rather marginal, which, however, didn't prevent the authors of some textbooks to touch upon the Jewish and Judaic issue.

**II. A. N. Sakharov, V. I. Buganov *History of Russia. Part II. End of the 17th through 19th centuries*** (Sakharov, Buganov. P. II. 1995). The only mentioning of Jews is found in the paragraph "Russia in the end of the 19th century" where the authors assert that "Judaism was practiced [according to the 1897 census. – A. L.] by 175 thousand people (0,2%)", while according to the same 1897 census there were 5,189,401 Jews registered in the Russian Empire (Jewish Encyclopedia, Volume 11, page 376; see also Brutskus, 1909). The very same "scientific discovery" is repeated in the textbook by **P. N. Ziryanov *History of Russia. 19th century*** (Ziryanov. 1995). In the chapter "On the verge of the 20th century" we read: "Judaism was practiced by 175 thousand people (0,2%)" (Ziryanov. P. 168). In the textbook by **V. I. Buganov and P. N. Ziryanov *History of Russia. End of the 17th through 19th centuries*** (Buganov, Ziryanov. 1995) in the paragraph "Russia in the end of the 19th century" there again appears almost a paradigmatic phrase: "Judaism was practiced by 175 thousand people (0,2%)" (Buganov, Ziryanov. P. 353).

In **A. N. Sakharov's** textbook ***History of Russia from the earliest times till the late 16th century*** Judaism is mentioned in the topic "Baptism of Rus" (Sakharov. P. 67), and in the topic "1113 Revolt in Kiev" there is quoted the evidence (disputed by present-day historiography): "The crowd smashed up the homes of the boyars and moneylenders, and the blow didn't

spare the Jewish merchants and moneylenders who locked themselves in the synagogue” (Sakharov. P. 105).

In the textbook by **A. N. Sakharov and A. N. Bokhanov** *History of Russia. 17th -19th centuries* (Sakharov and Bokhanov. 2003) a Jewish story appears only once in the paragraph “The economy and population of Russia in the second half of the 18th century”: “The status of the Jewish population in the western provinces of Russia remained discriminant. Judaism was regarded as a hostile religion. It was at this particular time that the pale of settlement designating where Jews could live was introduced” (Sakharov, Bokhanov. Part II. P. 212). The authors do not go into any specifics about who and why regarded Judaism as a “hostile religion”.

**O. V. Volobuev, V. A. Kluev, M. N. Ponomaryov and V. A. Rogozhkin** note in their book *Russia and the world* (Volobuev et al. 2001) that the “ruling establishment of Khazaria practiced Judaism and suggested to Prince Vladimir that he turn to the Jewish religion (Volobuev et al. P. 49, 60). In the paragraph “Expansion of the territory of the State of Russia” (in the 18th century) it is noted that following the partitions of Poland, the number of Ukrainians, as well as the number of Poles and Jews living on Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian lands had increased. The authors apparently consider that this statement exhausts the role and place of Jews in the history of “Russia and the world”.

A whole range of textbooks were written by **A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina** covering the period from antiquity to modernity: **A. A. Danilov, L. G. Kosulina** *History of the state and the peoples of Russia. From the earliest times till the 16th century* (Danilov, Kosulina. 2000). The only mentioning of Jews is in the following sentence: “Rus had contacts with all the World religions: Jews-Khazars, Moslems-Bulgars and Catholics-Christians” (Danilov, Kosulina. P. 51).

The next by date textbook of the above authors is **A. A. Danilov, L. G. Kosulina** *History of the state and the peoples of Russia. The 16th through 18th centuries* (Danilov, Kosulina. 1999). In the paragraph “Peoples of Russia in the 18th century” it is stated that a number of peoples of Russia suffered from inequality: “In 1791, Catherine introduced the so-called pale of settlement beyond which it was prohibited for Jews to reside permanently” (Ibid. P. 302).

In the textbook by **I. N. Ionov** *Russian civilization. The 9th through the 20th century* (Ionov. 1995), in the paragraph “Civilizational alternative – 1. Judaism, Islam, Christianity” it is noted that “the chronicle recoded the actual situation of the Russian state facing the choice of a civilizational

alternative” (Ibid. P. 42). “The common source of Islam and Christianity was Judaism created in the course of the spiritual revolution of the *Axial Age*,” the author writes in the section “The World Religions”, and he continues: “The Ancient Rus was located at the interface of Europe and Asia, at the crossroad where civilizations meet each other. Therefore, there was a possibility of adopting any one of the three religions. Nearby, there were strong states and in each of them there prevailed one of the world religions”. One of them was the Khazar Kaganate where Judaism was the official religion. Having approached this historic fact, Ionov gives a most precarious and amateurish description of Judaism which, according to him, “completely took the shape of a religion only after Jews lost their nationhood in the 2nd century AD. The aim of Judaism was not to support the powers of the state but to preserve the cultural identity of Jews living in Diaspora. It served as a means of consolidation of the Diaspora Jewish communities on the basis of common rituals. The essential idea of Judaism is that God prefers the Jews above all other peoples, and that God promised to restore and glorify the Jewish state the result of which will be Kingdom of God on Earth and inviolable harmony will reign in the world. Thereby, Judaism establishes double moral standards in respect to Jews and gentiles which did not promote the unity of polyethnic societies. The pivotal figure of late Judaism is not the king but the priest and rabbi (teacher) carrying God’s word. It is true, however, that Judaism created a firm basis for the development of the economy and sciences. Unlike Islam and Christianity, it didn’t prohibit lending out money on interest to people of other ethnic groups. Judaism highly values cooperative labor and mutual help among Jews and was always distinguished by great respect for knowledge. [...] Jews themselves were suspicious about other peoples embracing Judaism and designated them as “the leprosy of Israel”. The ethnicity-dependant character of Judaism prevented it from becoming the religion of another ethnic state. This religion didn’t unite the population of a country but opposed the Judaic elite to the masses. The only things that the Khazars were able to achieve with the help of it was to stand apart from the Byzantine Empire and the Bagdad Caliphate and to maintain the spiritual unity of the ruling establishment and the Jewish merchants. However, this proved to be not enough for the survival of the state. When choosing the faith, Prince Vladimir had good reason to say to the Jews: “How can you hope to teach others while you yourselves are cast out and scattered abroad by the hand of God?” (Ibid. P. 45).

The author didn’t bother to explain why, of all others, it was Jews who were engaged in usury. To demonstrate that Jews disparagingly treat the converts

considering them inferior people, Ionov cites one of the opinions found in the Talmud: קשים גרים לישראל כספחה (“Proselytes are as hard for Israel as leprosy”). Not only the opinion is cited partially (only the leprosy comparison is given), but it is torn from the context of the discussion mentioned in the Talmud. Such treatment of this religious text is entirely inconsistent with its nature since any thought expressed there can be challenged, and it is necessary to know in what context it was stated. There exists the tradition of interpreting the Talmud text and it cannot be disregarded since the Talmud is nothing else but a posterior record of verbal discussions. One of the classical Jewish commentators stresses: at times, proselytes are more fervent in following the commandment than the Jews themselves and by doing this they serve as a kind of rebuke to the rest of the people of Israel who sometimes neglect the commandment – it is in this context that they are compared to a grave disease. Though, as is known, Judaism was not a religion based on proselytism, there were instances in ancient times and the Middle Ages when gentiles embraced this religion. Any person can embrace Judaism, and after the *Giyur* he/she becomes a full-fledged member of Jewish community. It is prohibited to call such persons their former names, to remind them of their descent and of what they had done when gentiles. According to the Talmud *Yerushalmi* and the Babylonian Talmud, a person who had embraced Judaism is considered to be “reborn”. By the way, some of the sages of Talmud were proselytes or descendants of proselytes and nobody called them “leprosy”. However, all these considerations were overlooked by the author.

Dealing with the 1905–1907 revolution, Ionov, unlike the authors of most of the textbooks, tells in considerable detail about the ‘patriotic movement’: “The ‘patriots’ called themselves the ‘Black Hundred’, that is, the genuine advocates of the grass-roots. [...] The Black Hundreds countered the socialist alternative in Russia with the fascist one. Basically, it was the struggle between two varieties of traditionalism, the revolutionary and the counterrevolutionary one. In October and November of 1905, in more than a hundred cities, there took place ‘patriotic manifestation’ under nationalistic slogans ‘Russia for the Russians!’ and ‘Russian People Unite’. These manifestations were accompanied by killing of intellectuals and by pogroms (in Kiev, Kazan, Kishinev and Homel), since it was the intellectuals and Jews who were regarded by the ‘patriots’ as the main revolutionary force. Within less than a month, there were about four thousand people killed and ten thousand wounded” (Ibid. P. 286–287). It is worth mentioning that in the new edition of the textbook the tendentious description of Judaism, as well as the assertion that the Black Hundreds’ activities were the ‘fascist alternative’ for

Russia were left out. Today, Ionov examines only the Islam alternative for the development of the Russian civilization. As for Judaism, it is only mentioned that it was “the common source of Islam and Christianity [...] established by prophet-teachers in the Far East (?)” (Ionov. 2003. P. 40). According to it we learnt from teachers and pupils from a number of schools, they still use the 1995 edition.

In the textbook written by **E. N. Zakharova** *History of Russia of the 19th through the early 20th century* (Zakharova. 1998) Jews are mentioned one-and-only time in the paragraph, dedicated to the First Russian Revolution: “Jewish pogroms rolled over the country” (Ibid. P. 251).

In the textbook written by **V. P. Ostrovsky and A. I. Utkin** *History of Russia. 20th century* (Ostrovsky, Utkin. 1995), in the topic “Territory and Population” it is said that “within the so-called Pale of Settlement (the authors don’t mention where it was located. – A. L.) lived a considerable part of the Jewish population. Only a few educated or highly qualified artisan Jews from the Pale were permitted to live beyond it” (Ibid. P. 6–7). In the paragraph “The Russian society is becoming politicized” far right parties and groups are mentioned. The authors note that the right-wing nationalists-Black Hundreds “divided all peoples into friendly and hostile ones. The latter includes Jews, the Caucasians, the Poles and the Finns”. Further, the authors note: “the governmental authorities strongly dissociated themselves from extreme nationalists [...] Stolypin insisted that a Tsar edict was issued putting the anti-Semitic book *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* under a ban (Ibid. P. 69–72). We will only note that the existence of the “edict” on the ban of the “Protocols” is a fabrication of the textbook authors. What is known is that when Nicholas II learnt that the “Protocols” were only a forgery of the Okhranka foreign department, he wrote the following endorsement on the draft proposal by the Black Hundreds to make extensive use of the book in political struggle: “A good cause cannot be defended by dirty means”. By the way, though the “Protocols” are mentioned in this textbook (the only book we know of), the authors don’t say that it was a forgery invented in the interior of the Police Department.

In the chapter dedicated to the Great Patriotic War, it is said about the Nazi plan to exterminate on the occupied territories “30 million Russians and 5 to 6 million Jews (Ibid. P. 286). Unfortunately, Ostrovsky and Utkin don’t draw attention to the fact that “5 to 6 million Jews” meant total extermination of the USSR Jews.

In the paragraph “Options of post-Stalin development” it is said about the Doctors’ case and that renowned doctors had been arrested “and declared

agents of the international Zionist organization” (Ibid. P. 343). However, it is not mentioned that the Doctors’ case was fabricated in order to stir up anti-Semitic hysteria in the country and that after the “leader” had died, the doctors who were lucky to stay alive were released.

The “Israel” story appears in connection with the 1956 events. It is said in the book that by that time, “the reorientation of the Soviet foreign policy regarding the Middle East had reached completion. In 1947 and 1948, the Soviet Union stood for the formation of the two states on the territory of Palestine, the Jewish and the Arab one, expressing sympathy, first and foremost, to Israel since the hope was to weaken the influence of Great Britain in the region. But quite soon, Israel was looked upon as the champion of the USA influence. The USSR was getting friendlier with Arab countries” (Ibid. P. 369). However, with this the topic of the Soviet- and Russia-Israel relations is closed and has no continuation in the book.

From the textbook written by **A. A. Levandovsky and Yu. A. Schetinov** *Russia in the 20th century* (Levandovsky, Schetinov. 1995) pupils will learn that “in 1905 through 1907, the Black Hundreds enjoyed secret support from the government and extensively implemented their ideas in practice (“all the troubles of the great and mighty result from the revolutionary intellectuals and non-Russians wishing to disintegrate it for the sake of their dubious interests”): killed revolutionaries, took part in disrupting meetings and processions, arraigned pogroms...” (Ibid. P. 46). With this the Jewish “topic” in the pre-revolutionary Russia in the book is completed.

In the paragraph “On the mainstream: the USSR and Germany” of the section devoted to the occupation regime established by the Nazi on the invaded territory of the USSR, there is the repetition of the same phrase from the textbook by Ostrovsky and Utkin: “According to the plan of the Nazi rulers, 5 to 6 million Jews and 30 million Russians were to be exterminated” (Ibid. P. 244). In the next paragraph “The rear in the years of war” (subsection “Politics and Culture”), among other figures of Soviet culture there is mention of S. M. Mikhoels, however without any reference to Jewish culture (Ibid. P. 254). In the paragraph “Socio-political and cultural life” it is briefly said about the so-called “struggle against cosmopolitanism” and it is noted that within its framework, “chauvinistic and anti-Semitic feelings were stirred up. [...] Secret service organized a series of new legal ‘cases’. Among such cases there are mentioned the Jewish anti-Fascist Committee trial, the “case of doctors-killers”. Tens of thousands of people were sentenced to different terms of imprisonment or to death. Among them were outstanding figures of culture and sciences (the actor S. M. Mikhoels, the writer P. D. Markish)”

(Ibid. P. 260). To be precise, Mikhoels was done away with without any trail, at the direct order from Stalin.

On the map of administrative and ethnic division of the Russian Federation in the textbook, Jews are placed in the south of the Khabarovsk Krai despite the fact that the greater part of the Jewish population lives not in the Jewish Autonomous Region but in the biggest cities of the country (mainly in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg). In the glossary appended to the textbook the term ‘anti-Semitism’ is explained as “a type of ethnic intolerance manifesting itself in hostility against Jews and impairment of their legal and social rights” (Ibid. P. 356). The authors did not find it important to tell the pupils about the social danger of this phenomenon.

**N. B. Zagladin, S. I. Kozlenko, S. T. Minakov, Yu. A. Petrov** *History of the Motherland. 20th century* (Zagladin et al. 2002). In the section “The new campaign of repressions” it is said that “the struggle against the so-called cosmopolitans developed into an orgy of nationalism and persecution and repressions against ethnic minorities, first and foremost, against the Jews. [...] The ethnicity line in the passport to which little importance was attached formerly, started to play a decisive role for the Jews: their access to higher education was limited. Plans were nurtured to transfer all the Jews to the Far East, to the Jewish Autonomous Region that was founded before. In the beginning of 1953, the so-called ‘doctors’ case’ was fabricated [...] with the accused being mostly Jews” (Ibid. P. 241). It must be noted that among all the textbooks we have discussed above this last one gives, perhaps, the most succinct and exact picture of the state-sponsored anti-Semitism in the USSR of that time.

The topic “USSR and the Middle East conflict” is confined to mentioning the role played by the Soviet military assistance: “having lost about a half of their aircraft in 1969 and 1970, the Israeli Air Force ceased its attacks on Egypt. The total expenditure for military assistance [to Egypt] beginning from 1965 till the year of 1972, when Egypt canceled the cooperative relationship, was \$3.2 million” (Ibid. P. 277). We will note that in the 2007 edition of the book this topic was considerably abridged.

**N. B. Zagladin** *World History. History of Russia and the World from the earliest times till the late 19th century* (Zagladin. 2002). In the paragraph “Russia, the Multiethnic Empire” the author writes: “significant changes in the ethnic composition of Russia were caused by the partitions of Poland. [...] Jews, who comprised one tenth of the population of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, became a noticeable part of the population”. Jews were the fourth biggest ethnic group of the Empire (3.9% of the population).

In the topic “Nationalities policy of the autocracy” it is noted that in the Russian Empire, unbaptized Jews (those who hadn’t embraced Orthodoxy) were considered to be non-Russians elements. We will note that Jews who turned Christian of other denominations were also granted all rights. Jews were “prohibited from buying and renting land and they were restricted in choosing places of residence, of study and of many types of occupation”. About the emigration of the Jewish population: “It is indicative that while among the 3.5 million people who came in the 19th century to the USA from Russia, there were relatively few ethnic Ukrainians and Belarusians (about 300 thousand people) while there were 1.5 million Jews (Ibid. P. 367–370). The author doesn’t say that it was the pogroms and persecution, along with impenetrable misery, that caused massive Jewish emigration.

The same information, without any commentary whatsoever, is found in the textbook written by **N. B. Zagladin and N. A. Simoniya** (Zagladin, Simoniya. P. 370).

A team of the abovementioned authors published a textbook chronologically covering the beginning of the current century too: **N. B. Zagladin, S. I. Kozlenko, S. T. Minakov, Yu. A. Petrov** *History of Motherland. 20th century through the early 21st century* (Zagladin et al. 2003). The paragraph “Russia on the verge of 19th–20th centuries” gives another proportion of Jews in the population: 4.2% (Ibid. P. 7). When dealing with the subject of the 1905 pogroms, the authors are inconsistent in terms of logic: they assert that “the pogroms were not aimed against a specific ethnic group” (!) and in the same breath they have to admit: “however there invariably existed anti-Semitic disposition and hostility towards Jews” (Ibid. P. 34).

In the paragraph “Soviet Union in the late years of Stalin’s life” it is said: “The campaign [struggle against ‘cosmopolitans’. – A. L.] developed into an orgy of nationalism and persecution and repressions against ethnic minorities”. You can guess that the only minority affected were Jews from the following sentence: “They closed all the Jewish cultural institutions (newspapers, schools, and theaters) and arrested many leaders of the Jewish community, including those who made a major contribution to the cause of the fight against fascism. In the context of the anti-Semitic campaign, many people who were previously promoted by J. V. Stalin lost their positions. Their families were also affected” (Ibid. P. 381).

It is a remarkable evolution of the views of one of the authors (N. B. Zagladin) who wrote something very different only a year before.

In the section “The USSR in the international arena. The 1960s and 1970s” the authors write about the defeat of the Arab countries in the

Six-day War, and that the USSR rendered diplomatic and military assistance to them and restored the fighting efficiency of their armed forces (Ibid. P. 338). It is noted that “in 1974, the United States denied most favored nation in trade to the Soviet Union accusing it of infringing the right of people of Jewish descent to emigrate (the Jackson-Vanik amendment)”. Further, the authors continue: “in defiance of common sense, the USA procrastinates in repealing the Jackson-Vanik amendment (1974) under which the granting of most favored nation in trade to the Soviet Union was made conditional on granting freedom of Jewish emigration...” (Ibid. P. 374, 450). We will note that the Jackson-Vanik amendment was caused by lack of freedom of emigration for all citizens regardless of their ethnicity.

Let us turn to the textbook written by another team of authors: **A. O. Chubaryan, A. A. Danilov, E. I. Pivovarov et al. *Russian history of 20th through early 21st century*** (Chubaryan et al. 2003). In the paragraph “The State and society in the end of the 19th century”, they speak about national movements and the appearance of political parties representing the interests of a number of ethnic groups in Russia. As an example of a Jewish party, they name, besides Bund, “Jewish Independent Workers’ Party” that had been made up by the tsarist Okhranka and survived only a little over a year. The varied in their political orientations parties (from Zionists to Autonomists) were overlooked, for unknown reason, by the authors and will remain unknown to the pupils.

In the paragraph “The rise of Nazi to power in Germany” it is said that the Nazis declared the “final solution of the Jewish question” one of their aims and that, simultaneously, they announced that the Slavs were subhuman and destined to subjection and extermination (Ibid. P. 107). The authors didn’t permit themselves to explain the real significance of the Nazi euphemism “final solution”.

In the paragraph “War and the society”, devoted to the period of the Great Patriotic War, it is noted that “especially cruel was fascists’ treatment of Jews and Gypsies who were driven off to ghettos and concentration camps over the entire occupied territory. [...] The leaders of the German Reich had a special plan for the extermination of Jews and Gypsies all over Europe. The biggest factory of death was Auschwitz. Over one million and one hundred thousand people (Soviet prisoners of war, members of the resistance movement, Jews and Gypsies) were exterminated there” (Ibid. P. 182). We will note that according to the Holocaust historians, about 1.1 million people perished in Auschwitz, over one million of them were Jews (Holocaust. 2005. P. 244).

The text carries an illustration “Prisoners of the Buchenwald death camp – the Holocaust victims”. The text itself has no mention of the notion Holocaust and the meaning of the word is given only in the appended glossary.

Writing about the “black years” of the Soviet Jewry, the authors speak about the fact that the “struggle-against-cosmopolitanism campaign [...] acquired an outright anti-Semitic character”, that the killing of Mikhoels “was organized by the secret services”; they write about the extermination of the members of the Jewish anti-Fascist Committee and point out that the doctors’ case “had immediately acquired an anti-Semitic character” (Chubaryan et al. P. 193, 194). Describing the situation in the country after Stalin’s death, the authors of the textbook inform the reader that on July 15, 1953, the government of the USSR announced its desire to restore diplomatic relations with Israel that were broken off by Stalin in February of 1953; however, they don’t mention the fact that the relations were broken off again by the Soviets in 1967.

A supplement to the textbook is the collection *Russian history of the 20th through early 21st centuries. Document and reference materials* under the general editorship of academician **A. O. Chubaryan** (Russian history. 2005) in which the only document dealing with the Jewish subject is a passage from the Soviet Union News Agency statement of January 13, 1953 “On the arrest of a group of saboteur-doctors”. In the questioner concluding the supplement there is a question: “Why was the ‘doctors’ case’ later called the ‘Beilis Case’ of the nuclear age?” (Russian history. P. 209); however the “Beilis Case” is not even mentioned either in the textbook or in the Reference Materials.

**III. A. A. Danilov, L. G. Kosulina** *History of Russia. The 19th century* (Danilov, Kosulina. 1998). Examining the situation of Jews in the reign of Catherine II, Alexander I and, particularly, Nicholas I, the authors say that as a result of the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, annexation of the Crimean Khanate and Bessarabia, with Georgia and eastern Caucasus becoming parts of the Russian Empire, Russia’s Jewish community became the largest in the world (Ibid. P. 134). As distinct from other textbooks, here we find information about the occupations of Jews (arts, homecraft, small commerce, mediation in exchange of goods between town and country); it is said that the major part of the Jewish population lived in the countryside and small towns, shtetls (Ibid.). Noting that Alexander I “wanted to encourage the people to engage in physical and agricultural labor by founding agricultural settlements in Novorussia (New Russia)”, the authors define the policy of Nicholas I, in

relation to Jews, as more “tough” and possessing a “discriminating character” (Ibid. P. 135).

In the subsequent editions of the textbook, the Jewish topic was somewhat abridged. Notably, the data on the size of the Jewish population and the mentioning of the “discriminating character” of Nicholas’s I policy have disappeared.

**A. A. Danilov, L. G. Kosulina** *History. State and the peoples of Russia* (Danilov, Kosulina. 2007). In our opinion, this is the most successful textbook among the ones we examined. The authors present the history of Jews in the pre-reform and post-reform Russia in considerable detail. At the same time, a number of important topics are left out; among them are: the origin of anti-Semitism in Russia; pogroms in the early 1880s and the mass emigration; the traditional way of Jewish life in the Empire; causes of the active participation of Jews in the revolutionary and Zionist movements.

**A. A. Danilov, L. G. Kosulina** *History of Russia. The 20th century* (Danilov, Kosulina. 1996). In this book, the Jewish topic suddenly became marginal, though the history of the later imperial Russia contains a wealth of material with regard to this: the czarist policy on the “Jewish issue”, the sharp aggravation of anti-Semitic disposition among the ruling circles and part of society; the rapid development of Jewish political, social and religious activities... Nevertheless, Danilov and Kosulina decided, for reasons unknown to us, not to touch upon these subjects at all in the sections dedicated to Russia in 1900 to 1917. In the paragraph “Changes in the political system of the Russian Empire”, it is written about the pogroms during the years of the First Russian Revolution but it is not said that the pogroms were against Jews. The first time we come across the word ‘Jewish’ is in the description of the biography of L. Trotsky’s who was born in “a wealthy Jewish family” (Ibid. P. 91).

Quite contradictory appears to be the coverage of the Soviet period. In the section “Soviet Union in World War II”, it is said about the plans of the Germans to transfer and exterminate “120 to 140 million Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles and Lithuanians”, but there is no mention of the Jews (Ibid. P. 206).

The “Jewish story” emerges in the paragraph “Strengthening of totalitarianism” dedicated to the Soviet regime during the post-war period. The authors point out that “the ethnic intolerance reached an especially high pitch in respect to Jews”. Further they write about the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee that was founded during the Great Patriotic War and became “the center of national unity”. In the textbook they write that representatives

of the Committee in their conversations with the state officials suggested that a Jewish autonomy should be set up in the Crimea or the Volga region, and that such suggestions were presented by the authorities as evidence “of the pro-American Zionist plot”. They write about the fact that in 1948 Mikhoels was killed by the MGB agents and that the members of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee (JAFK) and “people without kith or kin” charged with “cosmopolitanism” were arrested; that after a closed trial the leaders of the JAFK were executed (Ibid. P. 262). In the paragraph “Ideology and Culture” they once again relate about the struggle against “cosmopolitans”, with the executed P. D. Markish and L. M. Kvitko presented as victims of the struggle-against-cosmopolitism campaign (Ibid. P. 265). It is worthy of note, that the “doctors’ case” is included not in the “National policy” topic but in the “New spiral of repressions”: “The last lawsuit underway was the ‘doctors’ plot” who were charged with wrong treatment of the senior state officials” (Ibid. P. 261). And no mention is made about the anti-Semitic character of the “case”.

In the textbook written by **A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina** *History of Russia and its peoples. The 20th century* (Danilov, Kosulina. 2001), the «Jewish stories» are presented quite sparingly and incompletely. In the paragraph “Domestic policy in 1894 through 1904” it is pointed out that “the Jewish population also suffered from oppression within the so-called “pale of settlement”. The aggravation of the anti-Semitic disposition, “not infrequently acquiring the form of bloody pogroms”, is explained (or, maybe, justified?) by the active participation in the revolutionary movement of the Jewish young people who didn’t have the possibility to prove themselves on the public stage, as well as by the extension of the economic influence of the Jewish capital. There is mention of the first major pogrom in Kishinev in April of 1903, and of the fact that the suggestions aimed at equalizing Jews in their rights with the rest of the population were met with opposition on the part of Nikolas II. In the paragraph “The peak of the revolution”, it is pointed out that the monarchists put forward the idea of the “‘external enemy’ bringing in distemper to the country. This is why anti-Semitism played a prominent part in their ideology”. Danilov and Kosulina write about “the pogrom wave that rolled over the cities and settlements” of the Empire (Ibid. P. 46–47). In the paragraph “Political life in 1907 through 1914”, there is mention of the introduction of the percentage quota for the Jews who could be admitted to educational institutions (whereas, in actual fact, the quota had been imposed twenty years earlier, in 1887); a special reference is made to the “Beilis Case”.

In the paragraph “The nationalities problem after the February Revolution”, it is pointed out that the Provisional Government adopted a

special decree on repeal of the “residence qualification” and the Jews acquired all civil rights (Ibid. P. 99).

Passing on to Soviet history, Danilov and Kosulina leave out the subject of the bloody pogroms during the Civil War, while in the chapter “The USSR between World Wars: The experience of Building Socialism” in the topic “Nationalities policy and inter-ethnic relations” they, quite unexpectedly, touch upon the vast scale of “Ukrainization” that took place in Ukraine in the 1920s and that, according to the authors, caused resentment among the Russian and Jewish population that comprised a substantial percentage of city dwellers in the eastern and southern parts of the Republic (Ibid. P. 172).

In the sections of the book touching on the Great Patriotic War, the Jewish topic appears only in the context of the patriotic appeal of religious leaders, including Jews, who called upon the religious people to defend their Motherland. The pupils are told that in the fight against fascism, the “deeds of valor of Russian heroes, who closed the firing holes with their bodies were repeated by representatives of other peoples”, and among them “a Jew E. S. Belinsky” is named. The topics of Jewish soldiers fighting in the Soviet Army and the Jews members of the resistance movement, as well as that of the European and Soviet Jewry Holocaust victims are passed over in silence. Turning to the after-war time, the authors make mention of the “doctors’ case” but don’t say anything about its anti-Semitic character.

In the paragraph “Nationalities policy and ethnic movements”, it is said that “between 1967 and 1985 over 275 thousand Jews emigrated to their historical motherland” (Ibid. P. 362). Touching upon the subject of the relationship between the church and the state during the perestroika (1985–1991), Danilov and Kosulina write about the construction of new worship buildings of different religions, including synagogues (Ibid. P. 394). We must note that at that time not a single new synagogue has been built.

In the book written by **A. A. Danilov, L. G. Kosulina and M. Yu. Brand** *History of Russia. 20th century through the early 21st century* (Danilov, Kosulina, Brand, 2004), the Jewish subjects are presented in much the same manner as in the previous textbook. In the learner’s guide “Expanding the vocabulary”, anti-Semitism is defined as “ideology and policy of intolerance in relation to Jews”. It is pointed out that in the Great Patriotic War “108 Jews” were awarded, for deeds of valor, the distinction of Hero of the Soviet Union (Ibid. P. 238). However, the latest findings made it possible to adjust the figure: for deeds of valor during the war this distinction was awarded to 120 Jews soldiers (Краткая Еврейская энциклопедия. Т. 8. Стлб. 230).

In the textbook by **A. A. Danilov, L. G. Kosulina and M. Yu. Brand** *Russia and the World. Antiquity. The Middle Ages. Modernity* (Danilov, Kosulina, Brand. 2007) in the paragraph “Church, Society, State in 17th to 18th centuries” it is said (with reference to L. N. Gumilyov’s baseless historical speculation rejected by the scholarly establishment) that the relationship between Khazaria and the Vikings was self-evident: the “military campaigns of the Vikings in Central Europe and in the East were financed by Jewish merchants to whom the Varangians sold captured slaves” (Ibid. P. 263). The pupils will find out that the size of the Jewish population following the partitions of Poland was 676 thousand people and that the movement of Jews around the country and places of their residence were restricted by the “pale of residence” (Ibid. P. 270). The size of the Jewish population that found itself within the boundaries of the Russian Empire following the partitions of Poland is a matter of argument (Klier D. P. 40-41; Priceman L. P. 67), and it remains a mystery from what historical records or research findings the authors got this figure.

We will point out once more that the most serious drawback of the textbooks written by Danilov and his co-authors is the absence of the Holocaust topic in them.

Among the textbooks that more or less fully reflect the history of Jews in Russia and the Soviet Union, is also the textbook written by **L. N. Zharova and I. A. Mischina** *History of Russia. The 20th century* (Zharova, Mischina. 1999). In the chapter “The Russian Empire as a multiethnic state. The nationalities issue” it is pointed out that the Jews were the most deprived of rights: “Religious Jews had no civil rights at all. [...] In Russia, the pale of residence still existed. Nineteen Jews out of twenty lived in abject poverty because they were not permitted to travel in search of work” (Ibid. P. 10). Except for a small number of well-to-do Jews who were able to freely travel around the country, the authorities, as is rightly pointed out by the authors, followed in regard to the overall majority of the Jewish population the policy of *isolation* (the spacing type is in the text. – A. L.) from the rest of the Empire’s subjects” (Ibid. P. 10).

Unlike all other textbooks which don’t mention pogroms during the Civil War, Zharova and Mischina point out that “under Denikin anti-Semitism flourished: in Ukraine alone over 100 thousand people were killed in pogroms” (Ibid. P. 220).

Though the term Holocaust is not used in the textbook, in its sections devoted to the Great Patriotic War it is noted that “many millions of Jews in all occupied countries, including the occupied territories of the USSR, became

victims of genocide” (Ibid. P. 306). In the paragraph “The peak of Stalinism”, it is said: “In 1948, the State of Israel was founded. Some Soviet Jews welcomed this event for what they were accused of “rootless cosmopolitanism”. We will note that the causes of the “struggle-against-rootless-cosmopolitanism” campaign organized by the authorities were not confined to the positive reaction of some of the Soviet Jews to the foundation of the State of Israel (see G. V. Kostirchenko. P. 333–350).

The authors also devote some attention to the “doctors’ case”. However, they simplify the matter reducing it all to the fact that “among the doctors who treated Stalin there were some Jews who were accused of treating the leader incorrectly” (Zharova, Mischina. P. 339). They also write that “a show trial with the public execution of the ‘killers in white gowns’ was scheduled for mid-March of 1953 and only the death of the dictator saved their lives” (Ibid.). We will note that such views found in some memoirs based on widespread opinions and rumors are not substantiated by any known documents.

Touching upon the dissident movement, Zharova and Mischina consider the struggle of Soviet Jewry for repatriation to Israel as part of that movement (Ibid.).

We will make an especially thorough examination of **A. V. Filippov’s *Modern History of Russia, 1945–2006: A Teacher’s Handbook*** (Filippov. 2007). Some media claim that it is this book that is designed to be used as the basis for the new textbook on the history of the Soviet Union and contemporary Russia. This book has given rise to incisive criticism among the democratic community for its justification of the crimes of the Stalin regime (see Novaya Gazeta No. 40 of 19.10.2007; No. 44 of 16.11.2007; No. 1–2 of 18.01.2008; No. of 8.02.2008; No. 10 of 14.03.2008; No. 14 of 11.04.2008; No. 22–23 of 20.06.2008; No. 36–37 of 19.09.2008; No. 38 of 03.10. 2008).

In the paragraph “The Nationalities policy. Situation in the USSR republics during the last years of J. V. Stalin’s life”, a circumstantial and detailed account is given about the killing of S. M. Mikhoels and the “case” of the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee (the author calls one of the main accused under the “case” a member of the Party Central Committee A. Lozovsky, while he was Solomon Lozovsky). The author points out rightly that the struggle against “cosmopolitanism” had acquired, beginning with January 1949, a barefaced anti-Jewish tenor, and that many people began to perceive the words ‘cosmopolite’ and ‘Jew’ as synonyms (Filippov. P. 42–43). The “doctors’ case” Filippov also sees as having to do with the anti-Semitic campaign. “The greatest majority of the arrested doctors were Jews,” he writes. “The saboteur-doctors were declared Jewish bourgeois

nationalists and agents of world Zionism. Statements against “cosmopolitans” coupled with mass fear of “killers in white gowns” resulted in a vehement anti-Semitic campaign. There started countrywide arrests of Jews doctors. The Jewish intellectuals made penitential statements condemning Zionism. (We will point out an inaccuracy in this respect: such statements, letters to be precise, were being prepared in the highest quarters but were never published (Государственный антисемитизм в СССР. С. 470–479). Filippov also mentions the lawsuit against a number of Jewish leaders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia: “at this trial, Zionism is declared to be the greatest threat to the Communist movement”. Concluding this topic, the author gives a passage from Khrushchev’s recollections about Stalin’s anti-Semitism (Filippov. P. 50).

Reversion to official anti-Semitism after many years of official internationalism was a shock to the general public of western societies, writes Filippov. “The USA accused Stalin of “mass repressions” (quotation marks are the author’s. – A. L.) against Jews. Now, more and more people abroad began to *believe* (the spacing type is mine. – A. L.) that it was true”. “The leftists began to turn their back on the USSR,” writes the author. “The western communists also began to waver in their convictions. Even the faithful leaders of the People’s Democracies were growing circumspect. There were still a lot of Jews among them despite the recent dismissals and repressions, i.e., Matyas Rakosi, head of communist Hungary.

The “doctors’ case” resulted in a complete rupture of the already frosty Soviet-Israel relations. Filippov tells about the vehement indignation in the Israeli media and Zionist structures, about the bomb explosion in the Soviet embassy (mission, to be exact. – A. L.) in Tel-Aviv and the severance of diplomatic relations in February of 1953 by the USSR (Filippov. P. 51). The style of the presentation of the material is such that the reader may well come to the conclusion that the mass repressions against Jews were the latest canard of western propaganda.

The paragraph “Split of Germany. Foundation of the State of Israel. Creation of NATO” tells about the discussion in the UN regarding the foundation of the Jewish state: Filippov writes that the Stalin leadership supported the idea of the creation of the Jewish state “counting on the powerful leftist sentiments among the Jews” (Ibid. P. 61), he writes that the UN adopted the resolution on creating two independent states and that the Soviet Union and the United States helped Israel with arms, ammunition and food. Before long, the author informs, “lack of mutual understanding between Moscow and Tel-Aviv began to show. Having realized that Israel is

USA-oriented, Stalin had hardened to the view of the inherent harmfulness of Zionism”. What’s more, he was concerned about the attractiveness of Israel to some Soviet Jews (Ibid. P. 61–62).

In the chapter “The USSR between the mid-1960s and the early 1980s”, attention is also given to the “Jewish issue” presenting it as a “separate problem in the USSR” (Ibid. P. 225). Commenting on the Six-day War and the strong anti-Israel campaign in the Soviet media, Filippov points out that Israel’s victory caused an upsurge of ethnic self-awareness among Soviet Jews and that “simultaneously there was a burst of popular anti-Semitism in the USSR”; however, he doesn’t mention the fact that the “burst” had been inspired by the Lubyanka and the Old Square, in other words, by the KGB and the CPSU (B. Morozov. 1998). According to Filippov, the struggle of the Soviet Jews for the right to emigrate to their historical motherland was the reaction against the “burst of popular anti-Semitism”. Such an explanation simplifies this phenomenon of paramount importance in the modern history of the Soviet and world Jewry (Jews of Struggle. 2007; Очерки социальной истории. Шестидневная война... 2008).

Further, the textbook says that on June 10, 1968, the Central Committee of the Communist Party considered a letter signed by Yu. V. Andropov and A. A. Gromyko in which they proposed that the KGB and MFA should permit Soviet Jews to emigrate. Reunification of families should be considered the only grounds for emigration, while the KGB would be able to keep up using this channel “for operative purposes”. “However, a lot of people engaged in classified activities who wanted to emigrate were denied the permission” (Filippov. P. 226; the aforementioned document is published in the book Морозов Б. С. 62). Nevertheless, as is known, the decisive factor affecting the granting of permission to leave the country was not “classified activities” but, first and foremost, the international climate, pressure exerted by western governments and the public and the state of relations with the USA.

The 1970 “airplane case”, when a group of Jews planned to hijack a plane to fly abroad, the author presents solely as an act of “aircraft piracy” although it is well known that the plane hadn’t been hijacked. And all the would-be participants of the attempt were arrested by the secret services still on ground. Filippov is wrong when he writes that the Soviet government had to increase the number of exit permits every year (Ibid. P. 226). However, the number of exit permits issued, say, during the first six months of 1973 or in 1979 went up, while, for instance in 1974 and in 1981 through 1985, it was drastically decreased. In the paragraph “Foreign policy of the USSR from the second half of the 1960s through the early 1980s”, there is a separate

topic on the situation in the Middle East. It describes the Six-day War, the break of diplomatic relations with Israel and the provision of Soviet arms and military advisers to a number of Arab countries. It includes a passage from the recollections of the MFA officer P. Akopov about the talks between Egypt's Minister of War Shams Badran and the Soviet leadership on the subject of launching a preventive strike against Israel. From these recollections it follows that it was Israel who bore the responsibility for the outbreak of the Six-day War (Ibid. P. 234).

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Concluding the review, we will sum up certain observations and conclusions. We will repeat once more that a number of Russian history textbooks widely used today in the schools of the Russian Federation keep up the Soviet tradition and, just as it was "in the good old days", completely ignore the Jewish presence in Russian and Soviet history. As it was pointed out afore, a clearly tendentious, verging on anti-Semitism, description of Judaism is given in the first edition of I. N. Ionov's textbook *Russian civilization*. In the textbooks written by N. B. Zagladin alone and in co-authorship with N. A. Simoniya, we find a somewhat risky, with a certain underlying message, contraposition of the emigration of Jews to that of gentiles from tsarist Russia. In many of the textbooks there are clearly amateurish, in fact, dilettantish assertions. For instance, the mention of the Zubatov Jewish Independent Workers' Party in the textbook under the editorship of A. O. Chubaryan.

We will not find in the textbooks any information whatsoever about the Zionist movement in tsarist or Soviet Russia, or about the international Zionist movement and its goals, aims and leaders. Only in A. V. Filippov's *Teacher's Handbook* it is said that the "saboteur-doctors" were declared agent of world Zionism and that the Jewish intellectuals themselves made penitential statements condemning Zionism (Filippov. P. 50).

In a number of textbooks, we find some rejected by the contemporary world and Russian historiography assertions prevailing outside the scientific community, notably, about the "Jewish merchants engaged in slave-trade" (Danilov, Kosulina, Brandt. P. 263). In A. N. Sakharov's textbook there is information about the 1113 Revolt in Kiev and the Jewish merchants who locked themselves up in the synagogue. This information is based upon the "reconstruction" of the 18th century historian V. N. Tatischev who is critically perceived by the contemporary Russian historiography (Sakharov. P. 105).

At the same time, we will note that the pogroms that actually took place in Russia at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries are either made no mention of at all or are given a strange interpretation. The first wave of the pogroms in the beginning of the 1880s is not mentioned in all the textbooks we know. While the bloody pogroms of 1903–1906 are mentioned in a number of textbooks, in the textbook written by N. B. Zagladin and N. A. Simoniya we again come across the above “discovery”: it turns out that the pogroms during the 1905 revolution “were not aimed against a specific ethnic group”. Information about the Civil War pogroms, which were actually the forerunner of the Holocaust, we find only in the textbook written by L. N. Zharova and I. A. Mischina. The only (as far as we know) textbook where there is reference to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is the one written by V. P. Ostrovsky and A. I. Utkin; however, for some reason the authors were shy to say that it was forgery invented in the interior of the Police Department, the forgery that was used as a justification of pogroms during the Civil war and that was and is still used by anti-Semites of all stripes.

It should be noted that it is quite impossible to analyze all the subjects in all the textbooks having to do with the history of Jews in Russia and the Soviet Union. In fact, every line, sentence and paragraph even in the most complete, in terms of covering the Jewish theme, textbooks written by A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina (though there is no mention of the Holocaust) require updating, commenting, correction of inaccuracies, errors and reticences, and, at times, suffer from tendentiousness.

Every textbook, virtually in all its subjects, needs to be carefully edited, corrected, adjusted and annotated. In a lot of textbooks, the presentation of the Jewish theme is not based on adequate source studies and doesn't reflect today's level of historiography. The history of the Soviet Jewry is given very fragmentarily. Most of the subjects of the Jewish theme have to do with the anti-Semitic actions of the authorities. In this respect, the Jewish Anti-fascist Committee is the “most lucky” one. In a number of textbooks they speak about the killing of Mikhoels and the trial of the JAFK members. Less attention is given to the ‘struggle against cosmopolitanism’ and the ‘doctors’ case’ campaigns: not too often these campaigns are presented in the context of the “black years” of the Soviet Jewry and the anti-Jewish repressions in the post-war USSR. In the textbooks reflecting the Soviet period, you will not find any comparisons of the authorities’ policies concerning the Jewish ethnic minority in different periods of the Soviet state, as is done, for instance, in the textbooks written by A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina in relation to the pre-Revolutionary period. You will not find a textbook in which they would

speak about the state-sponsored anti-Semitism in the USSR beginning with the second half of the 1940s till the first half of the 1980s, as well as about the contribution made by the Soviet Jews to the development of the economy, defense of the country, advances in sciences, technologies and culture.

Lastly, we will dwell upon the Holocaust issue. In most of the textbooks, including the aforesaid works of A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina, there is no mention of the Holocaust or the genocide of Jews during World War II and the Great Patriotic War. There are only but a few exceptions. Among them is the textbook written by L. N. Zharova and I. A. Mischina where they speak about the “genocide of the Jewish nation” (though the notion of Holocaust is missing). In the reading-book under the editorship of A. O. Chubaryan, in the glossary, you will find the description of the term ‘Holocaust’. In the textbook by **A. A. Kreder *Contemporary History. The 20th century*** (Kreder. 1996) it is written about the systematic extermination of Jews in Poland; however, the number of the perished is not given, nothing is said about the Holocaust on the occupied territories of the USSR and the term itself is not mentioned. In the textbook by **A. A. Ulunyan and E. Yu. Sergeeva *Contemporary History of the Foreign Countries*** (2003) in the topic “Totalitarian regime in Germany” it is noted that Jews were proclaimed “enemies of the nation” and accused “of the deliberate destruction of the German state and the takeover of all the key positions in the economy” (A. A. Ulunyan and E. Yu. Sergeeva. P. 125). The catastrophe of the European Jewry is called genocide, but the term Holocaust is not mentioned in the textbook. In the section devoted to World War II nothing is said about the extermination of Jews, though on page 181 there is a photograph of “Hungarian Jews on the way to Auschwitz” with a question under it: “What feelings does the photograph arouse in you?” And only the latest edition of the textbook by **N. V. Zagladin *General History. Contemporary History*** (Zagladin. 2007. P. 34) *evidences that there is real progress in the coverage of the Catastrophe of the European Jewry*. In the topic “The Fascist dictatorship in Germany” it is said about the “concentration camps which became death camps for millions of Slavs, Jews, political adversaries of fascism and prisoners of war” and (in the same passage) about “the fierce hostility” of the Nazis against Jews. There is a passage there from “The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor” (of September 1939) prohibiting marriages to and extramarital relationships with Jews. And there is a question there for the pupils: “Why do you think the fascist regime decided to adopt such an inhumane law?” (Ibid. P. 51).

The chapter “Mankind in World War II” tells about the isolation of Jews and confining them in ghettos, about the special distinctive sign the Jews

were made to wear and about the “final solution of the Jewish question” that meant physical extermination of the Jewish people. The author informs the reader that “from 1941 to 1945 about 6 million Jews were killed in the death camps. This monstrous crime, an attempt to exterminate a whole people, was called the Holocaust (from Greek *holykaustos* – a complete sacrifice or destruction by fire)” (Zagladin. P. 84–85). There is a photograph there with the caption: “SS troops escort the residents of the Warsaw Ghetto. 1943.” One of the questions and tasks for the pupils is to explain the term Holocaust (Ibid. P. 86). The only remark we would like to make to the author is that the word Holocaust should be spelled with the capital ‘H’ as they do it all over the world.

At the same time, among the textbooks we analyzed you will not find one where it says that the Holocaust was an unprecedented event in the world’s history when a state attempted genocide or total extermination of an entire people regardless of their gender, age, place of residence, occupation and religion, and have done it for no discernible reason in terms of material, territorial or political advantage.

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Concluding our review, it should be noted that as compared with the Soviet times and the early 1990s, a certain progress has been achieved: in many history textbooks Jewish subjects are present one way or another. However, the authors of the textbooks still avoid acute issues and painful topics concerning the so-called “Jewish question” and the Jewish history as a whole. Neither the teachers nor the pupils will derive from the textbooks any reasonably detailed and sufficient knowledge on the history of Jews who have lived for ages in Russia, or get an intelligible explanation of the causes of the discrimination of the Jewish population in the Russian Empire. Nor will they understand the roots and causes of anti-Semitism in Russia and the Soviet Union or get to know about centuries-long contacts and interaction of the Jewish and Russian cultures. It is doubtful whether the existing textbooks will be instrumental in upbringing the pupils in the spirit of mutual respect and tolerance if they don’t understand the history and the spiritual heritage of the people who may be studying in the same school or living in the same house they do. Nature abhors a vacuum and, for lack of information, will fill it with whatever anti-Semitic myths, Judophobia literature and xenophobia spirits modern society is infected by.

Judging by the texts examined herein, it seems reasonable to say that not one of the textbooks available can be recommended to the teachers and pupils

as a publication that would quite fully and correctly reflect the history of the Russian Jewry using the latest studies of Russian and foreign scholars and raising problems that worry a lot of grownups and leave nonhealing wounds in the soul of a child.

Studies carried out within the framework of the “Sefer” Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, as well as seminars and publications on the subject, do not seem to arouse much public interest and remain beyond the mainstream academic humanities studies in today’s Russia. The Jewish studies are not among the scholarly disciplines recognized by the State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles. As a result, the reappearing Jewish studies are being considered alongside all kinds of humanities studies, beginning with archeology and all the way to the history of international relations. Turning back to the topic of our discussion, we will note that some of the textbooks, provided they undergo a certain modification, could facilitate a more complete and objective description of the history of the Russian and Soviet Jewry which is the integral part of multiethnic Russia. Unfortunately, we have to underscore that there is still no such textbook or study guide for the Russian Federation high schools.

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## JEWISH CULTURE IN RUSSIA: AN INSIDER'S VIEW

*Chaim Sokol*

I will begin with a statement which might just eclipse the ingenious assertion of the perestroika that “there is no sex in Russia”: there is no modern, living, vivifying Jewish culture in Russia. There are cultural centers (at least there is one in Moscow; the rest with what probably is recognition of their limited capabilities call themselves community centers); there are cultural events; there are even some Jews left – but no Jewish culture. In fact, the notion of “Jewish culture” is an anachronism, arriving no earlier than the mid-nineteenth century, when due to (or despite) the efforts of the romantically inclined Haskala agents and the Zionist movement, primarily in Eastern Europe, the notion of “tradition” split into two elements – “culture” and “religion”. Religion inherited the rituals, the customs, and the laws – in other words, the halakha. It developed a party of advocates – the orthodoxy. Culture appropriated (or rather, emancipated) the spiritual achievements, translated into European categories – the literature, the art, the music, the folklore. The most prominent ideologists of Jewish culture were Akhad ha-Am, C. N. Byalik, I. L. Perets, C. Zhitlovsky, S. An-sky and others. Naturally, within the culture wars of languages, ideologies, and worldviews began. However, history (mass emigration, the Russian revolution, the Holocaust, the creation of the state of Israel) set everything right. In today’s globalized world, Jewish culture (hereafter – JC), like the notion of “national culture” in general, is an archaism, preserved from the Romanticism and the times of national emancipation and self-identification. Today it is more of a historical concept, used in the sense of “heritage”. In any case, JC in today’s Russia (and the rest of the FSU) resembles a flea-market, which in its essence is an ordered kind of junkyard. A flea-market, like any market, has its sellers and buyers.

There are four main types of buyers:

1. “Dandies” who have chosen vintage as a lifestyle and style of behavior, demonstrating, in their view, an inner freedom, a difference, or even a cultural protest. All typical for youth and passes with age.

2. Artists, scouring the market for a. – creative material and b. – inspiration. Accidental purchases change their shape and/or meaning at the artist’s fancy.

3. Collectors, obvious enough. Their market finds go into glass cases and folders, are sorted etc., forever stripped of utilitarian meaningful value and turned into memorials of themselves.

4. Poor folk, unable to afford proper goods from shops and resorting therefore to used items.

There are two types of sellers:

1. The profiteer, buying and reselling other people’s things. Occupies the lowest step in the hierarchy of businessmen. One may sometimes encounter hucksters who know something about antiques, but anyway most of them are swindlers.

2. The average Joe, usually a chance seller, parting with various rubbish-stuffs out of poverty or for lack of need. Generally has no idea about the real value of his merchandise.

There are also occasional accidental tourists, but they do not count. At any rate, the flea-market is the past personified, relating to the present only in the context of buying and selling.

The notion of “culture” has many definitions, all of which more or less boil down to some simple diagram (general enough, like every diagram). Every culture, including the Jewish, has three realms:

1. The material – production, technology, work tools, dwelling, clothing, weaponry, and so on and so forth.

2. The social – public relations, type of political government, legal and moral regulations, types of administration, and styles of leadership.

3. The spiritual – learning, art, literature, religion, mythology, and philosophy.

These three realms in conjunction form a special – cultural – environment (a discourse, if you will), which, on the one hand, is formed and supported by the collective effort and will of a certain group, but on the other hand it exists regardless of the will of an individual, a given member of the group. Inclusion in this environment is dependent not on the psychological and physiological qualities of the individual, but rather on the possession of a set of cultural codes, or a language, containing symbols, signs, behavior norms,

and life aims understood by all members of the culture. This can be called the worldview, and it is the fourth and probably the most important component of the concept of culture.

In the reality of modern Diaspora, the cultural environment may and should be incorporated (but not assimilated!) into the environment of the dominant culture. It is according to this definition that I claim that Russia lacks Jewish culture, as there exists no conjunction of three realms, nor even less so a unity of worldview. I will try to demonstrate articulately.

### **Material culture**

It is as funny as it is preposterous to speak today of a production and technology culture within one national culture. What could be said? That the production of prayer shawls, jackets, fur hats, candlesticks, mezuzahs, Passover trays, Kiddush goblets, yarmulkes, hats, wigs, as well as kosher food, is either ridiculously small or nonexistent in Russia. To be serious, this context (and the context of modern culture in general) allows for discussion of consumption instead of production. It is no secret that the above-listed items are excluded from the average Russian Jew's (in any definition whatsoever) basket of goods. No demand – no supply. Say, Moscow has only two or three kosher restaurants and scarcely any specialized shops. Whatever for? It is costly for both the client and the owner. There are scarcely even plain restaurants with traditional Jewish cuisine, as opposed to Azerbaijani, Georgian, Uzbek, Lebanese, Italian, Japanese, etc. There used to be an Israeli menu on offer at the Bilingua club, but it disappeared after a fire. The general restaurant/culinary lexicon features no stuffed fish, challah, beygeleh, etc. No question of putting matzos on the menu of usual restaurants on Passover. There are not even Jewish cookbooks (certainly not in general retail). Moreover, the category of kashrut is nonexistent on the level of mass production. There is not a single Russian product with the sticker “K”. (For comparison – in New York even some hot-dog stands display a note that reads “kosher”.) Russia in general lacks what is called a public display of Jewishness. True, most of her Jews are secular, distant from the traditions. But firstly, this is the reason, while I am merely describing a phenomenon without going deep into causal effects. And secondly, the point is not the distance, but rather the presence of a certain mobile group (a critical mass if you will), concerned with creating and supporting an image and promoting its interests on every level – restaurant to parliament. On the other hand, a ramified Jewish infrastructure has appeared in the FSU in the latter 15 years: synagogues, cheseds, community centers, educational facilities are

being built and renovated. I wonder – who owns these material values? Not legally; culturally. In other words – who needs all these? The answer is quite obvious: most Russian Jews are not “investors” nor “shareholders” in the Jewish structures, have no interest in the inheritance, and often know nothing about it.

### **Social culture**

Here, too, it is appropriate to discuss organizations. Today it is no overstatement that the modern Jewish community in Russia is not a group, united through a common history, goals, and interests, but quite simply a corporate body, i.e., an official organization (or a set of them), created and existing to provide various services, first and foremost to the Jewish population. Any attempt to coordinate the work of Jewish organizations ends either in nothing or in another organization. To be fair, some organizations have a more-or-less constant circle of clients, who however have no effect on either the activity or even the existence of the organization. The wars over closing and opening Jewish organizations are usually fought on the administrative/bureaucratic level and have nothing to do with the target group. The budget battles may be called “fund-wrestling”.

Hence the definition of a leader; it is usually the official head of some organization or other. Even a rabbi for the sake of his own legitimization must hold the position of a Rabbi-in-Chief. These offices (including the rabbi) are non-elective, and the main aim of every leader is to preserve his/her own organization. The notion of a council of trustees is purely nominal.

Nor does Russia have a financial-political lobby. The only lobby worth talking about is the intra-Jewish one, representing in some way the interests of the Russian Jews (i.e., the structures and the organizations) before the foreign sponsors. Most of the organizations are subsidized by external, foreign sponsors. So there are barely any financial leaders too. Potential insider sponsors are interested in oil, football, and politics more than in the fate of the Jewish community. Things are not much better with the so-called “spiritual” leaders either. As mentioned before, the rabbis are in fact also heads of synagogues or various federations and confederacies. They have business and administration to attend to; they have very little time for social and educational work as such, like, say, writing books. In any case, not one of the rabbis currently residing in Russia is as much as an intellectual authority, not to mention a dominant intellectual influence. Some of the “infiltrates” from various instances happen to be interesting, but these are temporary people whose memory hardly outlives their term

of office. Unless some culture-flusher, having done his/her time in Moscow, removes his/her shoulder straps, cleans the Jewish stables with his/her witty pen, and immortalizes his/her image in book sales. There has been no “Jewish intelligentsia” in the sense of a group of people with a social-cultural reputation and position, educated in the Jewish way (versed in Hebrew, reading the Talmud or Tanakh, etc.), publicly identifying themselves as Jews, and most importantly, active in the Jewish context (journalism, philanthropy, literature, theatre, cultural ties, human rights activities, etc.) – no such group in Russia, perhaps since the last members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were shot. The Jewish organizations are trying to impose Mikhail Zhvanetsky, Arkady Arkanov, Mark Rozovsky, Gennady Khazanov and other stand-up comedians as cultural idols. Well, to each his own living – some moonlight as Santa Claus at matinees, and others subsist as “the Sages of Zion” with not much to do and no dependence on the season; a standard performance for a standard fee.

Perhaps due to lack of leadership and a general inertness of the masses there is another regrettable fact. In the last ten years at least there was no private initiative, originating from “down below”, in the Jewish context: no mutual aid groups, no cultural unions, no educational circles, no human-rights or political action. There is no “private” school out there without the jurisdiction of the Israeli Ministry of Education.

### **Spiritual culture**

Here is a selection of the main programs of a Jewish cultural center in Moscow: yoga, children’s ballet school, popular singing school for children, ballroom dance school, music school, children’s theatre school, children’s art school, pottery class, textile doll-making course. There is an Anglican center close by with the same set of services available, but all the classes there are in English. Goethe Institute publishes its booklets and posters in German too; here everything is in Russian. How else, surely not Hebrew? You can indeed take a Hebrew class, but speaking it is not on the employees’ list of duties, and to “Khag sameakh!” the manager girl’s reply was “Anna!”

Granted, there is both a *beit-midrash* and a school of *madrachim* since recently. It would be unfair to complain, all in all: even Klezmer and Ladino concerts are held in Moscow today. No matter that there are less such bands in all of Moscow than fingers on one hand. So they are few – but they exist. The Eshkol project has introduced Jewish Israeli culture to various clubs. Who cares that most of these are second-rate rock-bands which sometimes sing in English? Books are also coming out now. Though few, mostly for children, and

translated to boot. On the upside, the intellectuals on the Booknik website have something to write about; and then the website is complemented with reviews on books containing the word “Jew” at least once, jokes, stories, and recipes. Such websites are many. Those who so desire in Moscow today have the option of learning Cabbala, attending lectures in scholarly and non-scholarly Judaism, learning Hebrew, sending their children to Jewish kindergartens and schools, attending Jewish theaters and youth clubs. There are even Jewish discos.

Dismissing the skepticism and the sarcasm, the following problems can be pointed out.

1. Quantity. Even in its entirety the Jewish cultural and intellectual life is nano-sized on Moscow’s scale and is invisible to the naked eye on the cultural map of the city. Even once the eye is properly dressed it is difficult to spot even two or three events a week.

2. Quality. The low quality of Jewish cultural events has been discussed copiously. Usually on offer is either a provincial amateur product or a substitute in the shape of scholarly conferences, venerable maestros and rock-n-roll of the 1960s, and costly festive banquets.

3. Finally, the essential point. Any culture, Jewish culture even more so, belongs to the world of texts and is impossible without it. The main function of culture in its spiritual sense is creating and transmitting meanings – a vital function in the Jewish context. If Torah (Lore, Text) is comparable to the air the Jewish people have been breathing for millennia, then *midrash* is the blood, delivering oxygen to the cells. It is common knowledge that when blood circulation stops, the body dies. It seems that in this sense the Jewish culture in Russia is long dead. It died in the traditional sense and did not come back in a modern style, following, say, Levinas. There are no teachers, nor interested students. Direct contact with the Book is lost, and the text only appears rendered. Many Jewish organizations even lack its physical incarnation: thus, in Hillel I was hard pressed to find enough copies of the Tanakh. Several Humashes were found after weeks of searching. The Steinsaltz Institute for Jewish Studies’ attempt to organize *beit-midrashes* throughout the country has practically failed. The *beit-midrashic* “school” of the late Yulya Shurukht is still developing – a somewhat poetic movement, in my view, certainly important, but too focused on itself with no connection to actual life.

In other words, Jewish spiritual life in Russia is mostly a culture of consuming “tinned food” (no protein, no vitamins) and is more related to the material realm than the spiritual.

**Worldview**

To summarize all that has been said: lack of an intellectual elite, of a tradition of learning and interpreting texts, and of a common cultural canon, relevant to the given place and time, leads to atrophy of the cultural languages and therefore to loss of values and blurring of moral and ethical boundaries. Consequently production and consumption fade out in the material realm, and social bonds are destroyed or not even created. The culture dies. That is, morality still exists, and values probably do as well, but all in the framework of a foreign language – meaning that the identity is foreign, and so is the culture.

Thank God there is at least that.

# JEWISH CEMETERIES IN THE FSU

## JEWISH CEMETERIES ON THE TERRITORY OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

*Jewish cemeteries are unique monuments of cultural heritage. Thousands of tombstones show us amazing examples of art, and epitaphs can be an important historical source. Besides, especially during the Soviet period, the cemeteries often served as semi-formal or unformal religious centers, in place of closed synagogues.*

*Unfortunately, nowadays old Jewish cemeteries are mostly in a very poor condition, and their deterioration continues. Almost the only way to save these marvellous monuments for next generations is their documentation and fixation of survived epitaphs and art material. First attempts to catalogue Jewish cemeteries of the FSU were made about thirty years ago, but almost none of them were finished. Now there are several wide-scale projects on description of East European Jewish cemeteries. In the activities of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress aimed at preservation of cultural heritage of the region, the support of these efforts plays an important role. One of the first successful attempts of this kind is a complete documentation of the unique Jewish necropolis of Chufut Qale, made by the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies with support by the EAJC. The editorial board decided to include a special part dedicated to Jewish cemeteries in various regions of the former Soviet Union into this issue of the Euro-Asian Yearbook.*

NOTES ON EASTERN JEWISH NECROPOLISES  
(CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA)

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There is not much literature on Jewish necropolises in the territory of the former Soviet Union and the amount of it dedicated to cemeteries and other types of burials of the non-Ashkenazi Jewish sub-ethnic groups is even less. In fact, we can only cite a number of studies carried out as far back as in the 19th and early 20th centuries on the cemetery in the so-called Jehoshaphat Valley in Chufut Kale, the famous Jewish Karaite necropolis in the Crimean Mountains; studies of the Jehoshaphat Valley monuments resumed in the Soviet times after a long pause by the Georgian semitologist Nisan Babalikhshvili. He also devoted a number of works to Jewish epitaphs in Transcaucasia<sup>1</sup>. The untimely passed away scholar certainly occupies a special place in the history of Soviet Hebrew and Jewish Studies. His papers that were published in Georgia, where the attitude towards Jewish issues was relatively liberal, stand out by virtue of their very existence and high proficiency amid the utter lack of any Jewish studies in the former Soviet Union. Today, at long last, already in the post-Soviet period, large-scale researches are being carried out at the same Chufut Kale under the auspice of the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies headed by Artem Fedorchuk. Apart from Chufut Kale, the recent discovery by Israeli and Armenian archeologists of a Jewish cemetery dating back to the 14th – 15th centuries, located in the Armenian Highland to the south of Lake Sevan, is worth mentioning.

As far as I know, the above list exhausts all the references on Jewish necropolises. However, the subject of cemeteries and burials, including the memorial ones, is of considerable importance to Jewish communities in

the post-Soviet space. A lot of resources are being spent on maintaining abandoned cemeteries and on erecting monuments in places of mass execution of Jews in the Holocaust. Jews strive to preserve all the graves of their ancestors on the land where they had lived for centuries. Not infrequently, cemeteries become a matter of severe opposition between ultrareligious Jewish groups, secular Jews and temporal authorities. A notorious example of this is the recent scandal around the deteriorating Jewish cemetery in Grodno, Belarus.

Besides, any necropolis is a rich and distinctive source of explicit or implied information on the history, social development, onomastics, arts and other aspects of the life of a group that created it. An in-depth study of necropolises is quite a complex and painstaking job requiring a lot of time and much skill in processing big amounts of data, making drawings, etc. The work is frequently complicated by the opposition on the part of the graveyard administration or, when it is an abandoned graveyard, on the part of the archeological or town-planning authorities. Sometimes, there are also protests from the religious Jewish establishment. While it may take long before such studies appear, in the meantime, colleagues involved in interfacing problems, or just keen readers, may well be interested in some information, including fragmentary materials. This is why I dared to offer to the publishers of the “Euro-Asian Jewish Yearbook” a number of notes about Jewish necropolises which I wrote over twenty years ago during ethnographical excursions to the regions of Jewish settlement in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

These records were made in 1985–1986 when a voluntary Jewish History and Ethnography Commission founded by a group of ethnographers and historians interested in the development of Jewish studies was active in Moscow. One of the most requested activities of the Commission was the study of the necropolises of non-Ashkenazi USSR eastern communities. Some of the colleagues jokingly called the subject “Lakhlukhism” (from the ethnicon Lakhlukh, one of the names of Aramaic-speaking Kurdistan Jews). Being an ethnographer by profession, I was also interested in the subject, though I couldn’t have it as an officially approved or major topic of my research program. In those years, I managed to make a number of trips to Dagestan, Abkhazia, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. By their character, I would call these trips ethnographical excursions. Usually, the aim of a trip was other than the study of the Jewish population and, therefore, there was no systematic research program for it. What I did was only fragmentary sketches of what I encountered and saw without trying to provide an integral coverage

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of the ethnographical or social situation. To some extent, the State Security Committee of the USSR (the KGB of sad memory) helped me with these trips by regularly sending me out of Moscow under various excuses during the time when some important Soviet events were held. In 1986, when one of the last Communist Party Congresses was taking place, the KGB, worried that I might somehow upset the agenda of the event, ordered the governance of the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR where I worked to send me on a business trip. When they asked me at the Institute where I would like to go, I mentioned Central Asia.

In the case with Dagestan it was different. An all-Union Conference on the Family was to be held there, and since I had worked a lot on the problems of kinship, I filed an attendance request. But this time, the governance of the Institute refused to send me there fearing that I will use the trip for the study of the Dagestan Mountain Jews, which was totally out of the Institute's research program. I had to take a short-term leave and go to Dagestan on my own in order to partake in the conference and... to get acquainted with the Mountain Jews of the republic.

In Abkhazia I spent several surveying seasons studying the longevity of their population. During my short visits to Sukhumi, the capital town of the then Autonomous Republic, I met local Jews, talked to them and, as was the case in other places, attended cemeteries. Hereafter, you will find abstracts from the field records I kept then.

### **Derbent**

*I would like to remind the reader that Derbent, a town located close to the Russia-Azerbaijan boundary, is believed to be the major place of the settlement of Jews. According to the 1989 census, there were about 12 thousand Jews there, which was the largest concentration of Jews in the RSFSR after Moscow and Leningrad. The Derbent Jews spoke a distinct dialect of the Tat Jewish language and mostly lived then in the central part of the town between the Azerbaijani and Russian neighborhoods.*

The Derbent Jewish cemetery is located on the southern outskirts of the town, in a 15 to 20-minutes walk from the major bazaar. The cemetery is enormous, you can see it from afar, it looks like a forest of small menhirs. To an unsophisticated observer, it resembles a Muslim cemetery. There is very little greenery there, only in the very center of the cemetery you see two or three small trees. From north to south, the cemetery is cut by a shallow ravine

or a small channel on the either side of which they buried people as far back as in the 19th century. Except for the recent 10 to 20-years-old graves, all the gravestones are upright stelae (מצבה) without any horizontal gravestones. Stelae have engraved inscriptions and, infrequently, a modest ornament. The Magen David appeared as an element of the ornament beginning, approximately, in the 1920s. The design of the ornament changes with time, apparently, representing different teams of cutters.

Until 1940, all the inscriptions, except some very few, are in Hebrew. On the Ashkenazi graves, there are more such exceptions than on the Mountain-Jewish ones. All the stelae are in superior condition, especially those that belong to the semicentenary prior to the Revolution. The texts of the inscriptions are standard:

פ"נ איש תם והשוב מרדכי בן יוחנן נפטר בשבת ג' בכסליו בשנת... תוצב"ה (an example of the text)

*Here lies an honest and distinguished man Mordechai son of Yohanan, Died on Shabbat, 3d of Kislev, year of ..., May His Soul be Bound in the Bond of Life.*

The poor Hebrew literacy of the cutters or authors of the text is indicated by the fact that in many cases, after the word בשנת (in the year of) the year number is missing.

The earliest graves I discovered were a group of them in the very center of the cemetery on top of a small hill under a strange spreading tree, maybe a fig or an olive. They were small, not-too-high and almost square stelae deeply sunk into the earth. The inscriptions on them were amateurish, roughly engraved, the lines often crooked. The stelae are made of gray rather porous stone; it is hard to make out the inscriptions. The date is 1830. There are ten of them, they are all close to each other, all of the same year, and they differ markedly from the stelae of subsequent decades. The only graves they do resemble are those of the 1830s. Thus, the cemetery has been continuously functioning for almost 180 years.

Among the graves there is at least one decorated with a depiction of Kohens' fingers and hands folded in a certain way for the course of Birkat Kohanim (Priestly Blessing). The epitaph reads that there lies Yehiel ha-Kohen. This grave is interesting in the context of the occasionally expressed opinion that there were no Levites or Kohens among Mountain Jews, which argues for their proselyte origin. Unfortunately, it is impossible to judge from the text of the epitaph whether the deceased was a Mountain Jew, an Ashkenazi or a Jew of some other sub-ethnic group. Later, however, I did locate the surname Leviev among Mountain Jews. There are quite a few Ashkenazi graves in the cemetery: their proportion is approximately one to

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ten Mountain-Jewish ones. The graves attracting attention are the graves of the 1918–1920 pogroms' victims with inscriptions indicating how the people were killed, and calling for revenge.

In the last 15 to 20 years, the appearance of the graves has somewhat changed: they began to be made with horizontal gravestones, though they are still without any greenery. Without any exceptions, there are inscriptions in Russian on them, in many cases only in Russian and without the Magen David. There appeared portraits and photos on stone, including the portrait of the famous woman Heroine of Socialist Labor Giulboor Davidova who had lost both her sons in the war. There are even busts there. The gradual change in the appearance of the headstones attended by an evident increase in their cost (a common phenomenon for the Soviet Union, notably, for the Caucasus) is more noticeable among Mountain Jews than among the Ashkenazi. Another phenomenon visible on the graves of the last 10 to 15 years is the decline in Hebrew literacy. What is most indicative is that Jewish names written in Hebrew are now spelled the Tat way. For instance, while on the early stelae the name Livgo (the Tat equivalent of the Biblical name Rivka) is written as רבקה, on the contemporary ones it is spelled ליבגו.

All in all, the cemetery is unique both in the volume of available information and the good condition it is in, and is worth spending several days of an in-deep study. I was only about two hours there.

### **Sukhumi**

*Unlike Derbent, the Jewish population of the Abkhazia capital is not large, about 3.5 thousand people, according to the 1989 census, and had appeared there relatively recently. In 1985, most of them were Georgian Jews; there were also Ashkenazi, Mountain Jews from Vartashen (six families) and Krymchaks. There is little known about the history of the Sukhumi Jews and I haven't encountered any related studies. The relative literature only mentions the existence of a small Jewish community in Sukhumi. I visited the so-called "old" Jewish cemetery. According to Sukhumi Jews, it is the chronologically first Jewish cemetery in the town.*

As in the case of Derbent, the Sukhumi Jewish cemetery is also located on the southern outskirts of the town. It is not far from the Chanba Street, on the way to the Beslet bridge and to the kolkhoz that then bore the name of Akaki Tsereteli. The Jewish cemetery, as such, is only a small part of the №2 Town Cemetery, where there is also a Christian cemetery. There, the

contrast with the Derbent cemetery is stark. There is no specifically “oriental” appearance which is the characteristic feature of the Dagestan necropolis. On the contrary, there is a lot of greenery, on a hillside, the soil is wet with lianas, climbing plants and thorns. All the graves are contemporary, of the common European design, with horizontal gravestones and Russian inscriptions. Most of the graves, notably, the Ashkenazi ones are without any Hebrew inscriptions at all. Flowers are placed or even planted on many of them. The earliest grave I discovered was a Krymchak burial dated 1906, though there is no certainty that it is not a cenotaph.

What surprised me was the greater number of the Ashkenazi and Krymchak graves as compared with the Georgian-Jewish ones. Perhaps, Georgian and Mountain Jews now bury their relatives in the other more recent cemetery, though there are some Georgian-Jewish graves in the first cemetery too. There are many Krymchak graves and they are scattered all over the cemetery. There are no Hebrew inscriptions on the Krymchak graves and almost no Hebrew symbols, except for one or two of the 1940s graves with Magen David on them. Some of the graves are fancy and rich, on big fenced lots with stone benches and tables and even with busts. Such is, for instance, the grave of the procurator Kakiashvili. Most of the Georgian-Jewish graves have inscriptions written in Hebrew, as well as in Russian, and in some cases, also in Georgian (the 1940s – 1950s graves sometimes have Hebrew plus Georgian inscriptions with no Russian ones). Virtually, all graves have a depiction of Magen David and the anagram ם״ל (“Here lies”). More than a half of the Ashkenazi graves have no Hebrew insignia. Considering the scarce information available about the Krymchaks, in general, and the almost complete absence of any information about the Sukhumi Krymchaks, in particular, I believe that the cited below list of Krymchak surnames found on the epitaphs of the Sukhumi cemetery might be rather interesting (in parenthesis are the dates of burial or decease):

- Bakhshi (1906, 1918, 1918, 1960)
- Gotta (1952, 1967)
- Gurdzhi (1949, 1950, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1975)
- Gurdzhi-Mangupli (1951)
- Karakoz (1953)
- Khakhmigeri (1960, 1984)
- Khondo (1954, 1960)
- Levi (1931) [it is not clear whether it is a Krymchak grave or not ]
- Lombrozo (1946, 1981)
- Makogon-Mangupli (1979)

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Mangupli (1931, 1933, 1942, 1944, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978)

Manto (1966, 1970)

Mizrakhi (1932, 1972)

Piastro (1942, 1969)

Purim (1959, 1976)

Tokatli (1950, 1977)

### **Samarkand**

*Samarkand is the second city of Uzbekistan in significance and size after Tashkent. In the 1980s it was the most important and populous center of the Bukhara Jews. According to the 1979 census, there were 14.5 thousand Jews in the Samarkand oblast. Most of them were Bukhara Jews, a Tajik-speaking Jewish sub-ethnic group of Central Asia.<sup>2</sup> In Samarkand there was and still is a separate Jewish neighborhood. In Central Asia, a neighborhood of a city occupied by a separate ethnic or social group is designated by the Iranian word makhalya (community). Accordingly, the Jewish neighborhood was called Jewish Makhalya or, informally, Makhalya. Officially, the name was Oriental Community and it was an administrative unit of one of the city's districts. This was a significant feature since Makhalya always had and still has a certain level of self-administration, recognized by the state, which ensures the maintaining of the Jewish appearance of this part of the city. By the mid-1980s, about half of the Samarkand Jews already lived outside the Makhalya, in the so-called new city. However, almost everybody maintained their ties with the Makhalya, one of the reasons being that all the Samarkand Jews went there a few times a week to buy kosher meat from the shochet, or to bring him the cattle or poultry they bought at the bazaar to be slaughtered. The Samarkand Makhalya in those days was presumably the most compact, populous and active center of the oriental Jewry of the USSR.*

The northern part of the Oriental Community meets the highway separating the city from the site of the ancient town of Afrasiab where the old pre-Mongolian Samarkand was once situated. Along the other side of the highway, there stretches the famous ensemble – the Shah-e Zindah Tombs. The extension of it is a small Muslim cemetery, and beyond it is the immense Jewish cemetery. This is the Samarkand main Jewish cemetery, and there is one more, on the outskirts of the new city, where they bury, mostly, Ashkenazi, though there are some Ashkenazi graves in the main cemetery as well.

From the highway, a flight of steps leads to the cemetery gateway decorated with bright blue enameled tiles. Right beyond the entrance, are the graves of the famous people of the Makhalya that all its citizens are proud of. Here lies the outstanding singer Levicha Babakhanov, died in 1926, the court vocalist of the Emir of Bukhara. He was the first man in Central Asia, who recorded his music on a phonograph disc way before the Revolution. It was a big honor since the Emir never allowed him to perform publicly. In this case he said: “Do record your singing, because after you die, your voice will continue to live.” Babakhanov’s burial vault, though an old one, already bears the influence of the European style. On the grave, there is his portrait made from a photograph, or maybe it is a photograph made as a portrait. There are two inscriptions: a large-print Hebrew and a small-print Russian one. The burial vault is in the form of a small mausoleum with a dome and arches. Though, like most of the old burial vaults, it is made of adobe brick, it is fancier than the rest of them; its height is about 2 – 2.5 meters. Next to the mausoleum of Levicha Babakhanov, or to be more exact, around it, there are graves of distinguished people of a later period among whom there are many “granted ones”: The Honoured Artist of the Uzbek SSR, People’s Artist of the Uzbek and Tadzhik SSRs, People’s Artiste of the USSR, etc. There are graves here of singers and musicians, including some very renowned such as Rafael and Gabriel Tolmasov who descended from the Anusim (who are called here Chala), a family who were forced to embrace Islam. Not far is the grave of another famous Chala, Abraham Abdrakhmanov (who was a minister of the Uzbek government in the 1930s) and his wife. In the same row of graves you notice the grave of the daughter of the writer David Kalantarovich, with an engraved long poem of hers written in the Tajik language. All these graves of the late 1960s and the 1970s are strikingly different from the old graves. They all are large standard black-granite stelae, with the customary photo portraits and only Russian language inscriptions (except for the aforementioned poem in Tajik). Hebrew had disappeared from the gravestones somewhere around the late 1960s – early 1970s. After that time, an inscription in Hebrew was a rare exception. If there is such an inscription, it comes on the horizontal gravestone and not on the stele, on the stele the inscription is in Russian.

You will note that there are no introductory abbreviation פ”נ, characteristic of Ashkenazi gravestones. The Hebrew inscriptions, including the old ones, give the full version of ...פה נטמן איש צדיק... (here lies the honest man...) instead of the usual abbreviated one.

The place near the entrance was always considered the most honorable in the cemetery. But recently, the community had built at their own expense

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a big fine War Memorial at the other far end of the cemetery. It depicts a grieving woman inclined before a high stele. On the steps leading to the figure there is an engraved inscription in Russian. Now, the most honorable place on the cemetery is next to this memorial. In the Makhalya, there is competition and buy-and-sell activities in regard to the prestigious places in the cemetery. Among the recent graves, a good many of them are graves of young people killed in the battles of the Soviet Army (a special small alley) and those perished as a result of accidents or murders. Some of the killed were drug-traffic mafiosi. In general, the Makhalya natives regardless of where they live, be it the “new city” or any other city, e.g. Dushanbe, want to be buried in this cemetery. Close to the main entrance, to the left of it, there is a rather big space for corpse-washing and funeral service. It is a plot walled off on three sides and with a roof covering about one third of its area. On the ground, there are concrete tiled platforms resembling bath benches. On the walls, there are several marble plates immortalizing, in good Hebrew, the names of people who donated for the construction of this facility. There is no Russian text there. In 1986, corpse-washing was done by a history teacher from a Makhalya school.

The oldest graves I saw belong to the first decade of the 20th century.<sup>3</sup> They all are situated close to the entrance, to the left of it. Farther inward from the highway, there stretch almost infinite ranges of graves, all laid of yellowish-brown adobe brick with upright marble slabs fixed in it. The architecture of the graves is quite diverse and it hasn't got that standard appearance which is the case in Derbent. Prevalent are squat small domed shrines from 1.5 meters or even shorter to 2 to 3 meters in height. Some are originally looking three-, four- or even five-step square-in-plan pyramids narrowing to the top. There were Russian inscriptions virtually on every grave I saw but on the oldest ones they were limited only to dates of birth and death with the names of months written in Russian. Later, the Russian and Hebrew inscriptions became even in number and eventually Russian inscriptions ousted the Hebrew ones. Inscriptions in the Bukhara Jewish language I found only on one or two graves of the 1920s. On one of the stelae the inscription was in Latin letters.

Quite unexpected and amazing was the abundance of carved decorations on old graves. Most of the stelae have, engraved in stone, drawings of some shrines against the background of a landscape. These drawings resemble primitivistic Muslim and Jewish pictures of “holy places” that one often sees in the homes of local residents. In this case, artists, most likely, wanted to depict Jerusalem or other holy places. On a number of stelae, I noticed

fancy and sophisticated engraved ornaments (in “oriental style”) around the inscriptions.

Though having changed and become less spread, the tradition did not disappear altogether. A sample of it is a primitivistic depiction of a fatal road accident: on the left you can see a car rammed into a post, with a tramcar of a trolleybus in the center of the composition, and houses on the right. When looking at the engraving, one can sense the continuity of the earlier tradition of depicting holy places.

In the opposite to the entrance of the cemetery end, not far from the granite shop, in a barren and, undoubtedly, second-rate-in-the-past part of the cemetery (though its rating must have gone up thanks to the proximity to the War Memorial) there is situated the “Ashkenazi Corner” where the oldest graves go back to wartime. There are not many Ashkenazi graves, only a few dozen of them, and they are separated from the main cemetery by an empty space. Interestingly, among them there is one grave of a Bukhara Jew (judging by his name). This may be explained by the nearby graves of women with typically Russian names and surnames. Most likely, the man had been married to a Russian woman (he died in the 1950s) and he, his wife and her relatives were buried in a less honorary Ashkenazi “corner”.

In the early 1980s, the community managed to obtain the permission of the Municipal Council for expanding the territory of the cemetery. However, the situation, on the whole, has not been resolved since the cemetery is located on the territory of the Afrasiab Archaeological Park which is a UNESCO world heritage site. The expansion of archaeological or restoration activities at the Afrasiab site may lead to the destruction of the Jewish necropolis.

\* \* \*

Even these short fragmentary descriptions of the three Jewish cemeteries enable us to draw certain conclusions and note some regular patterns. Some of them are quite trivial. For instance, all the three cemeteries give evidence of a gradual disappearance of old-type burials and the leveling of all new tombstones according to a certain average “Soviet” type. In all the three cases, the Hebrew inscriptions either disappear or become scarce. If you ever visited a Jewish cemetery in European Russia or in the western SIC republics, you will know that this phenomenon is characteristic not only and no so much of eastern Jewish groups but, still to a greater extent, of the Ashkenazi. There are many reasons for this but the main reason is, surely, the increasing departure of Jews from the religious tradition, disregard of burial norms and customs, in other words, the increasing acculturation

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involving the entire Soviet Jewry in the post-war period. As we can see, this process, maybe to a less degree, still affected all the eastern Jews. You will note that on the graves of Georgian Jews, who have mostly maintained their devotion to the Jewish religious traditions, there are, nevertheless, inscriptions in Russian, the language many of them could only barely speak. Among the reasons for the disappearance of Hebrew inscriptions, we can cite the reduction in number of people in command of Hebrew basics, as well as the expensiveness of such inscriptions.

It is noteworthy that, virtually, nowhere spoken Jewish languages (in this case, Tat, Tajik, Jewish, Georgian and Yiddish to an extent) are used in epitaphs. This is in full conformity with the low, or pejorative, status of spoken languages in the Jewish linguistic culture. Traditionally, spoken languages were considered to be the low level of culture or spirituality. As is known, in the 19th and 20th centuries, the situation started to transform and spoken Jewish languages became, in some cases, tools of cultural policy or, even, of the change in identification. It will suffice to mention the turbulent fate of the Yiddish language and all the discussions about its role in the Jewish life that took place up to World War II and, even, after it. It was Yiddish that was used by the Soviet propaganda in opposition to “bourgeois” Hebrew. Tat language was, certainly, used as a tool for the “dejudaization” of Mountain Jews which I have mentioned in the present article. In various historical situations, Jewish spoken languages obtained high prestigious statuses. But what is essential in this context is that the cemetery and funeral rites become the dernier resort for everyday Jewish religious culture. It did not experience the shift from the supreme to the inferior and the status changes that were raging in the secular Jewish life. The spoken languages maintained their pejorative status and neither Yiddish nor Tat or any other language had noticeably found their way into the grave epitaphs. Instead of them it was Russian, the language of the empire and the official language of the country, that had intruded everywhere.

All the three cemeteries give evidence of another regularity that you will see at other Jewish cemeteries: the graves of different Jewish sub-ethnic groups occupy, as a rule, different clusters within the same necropolis. Furthermore, in some cases these clusters may be ranged according to a certain prestige pattern. Thus, in Samarkand, the Ashkenazi “corner” was obviously second-rate and those members of the local community who demonstrated deviant forms of social behavior (notably, cross marriages) were also “moved out” there. The existence of such clusters may give some ground for cautious historical conclusions. Thus, it seems likely that it was the Krymchaks who

were the first Jews to settle in the early 1900s in Sukhumi, though it has to be verified by archive and the Civil Registry Office data.

There is also evidence in favor of the diffused opinion that the Jewish tombstones are, at the same time, monuments of folk art. According to D. Goberman, “engraved tombstones... are the artistic creativity realm that belongs to the past”.<sup>4</sup> The available data on eastern Jewish cemeteries make it possible to assert that, at least, among eastern Jewish communities this type of creativity was still common 10 to 15 years ago and it is reasonable to suppose that it exists even now. It’s another matter that this kind of creativity manifests itself not only as high folk art but also in the form of kitsch. However, it doesn’t diminish, in the least, the significance of such monuments since it is kitsch that often liberates the creative potential of the people.

It is hard to say what has happened to all these cemeteries of late. During the last ten years that passed since I wrote my observations, Sukhumi went through a destructive war, its Jewish community first ran away and then gathered together to make their exodus to Israel. After the war, when it seemed no Jews were left in Sukhumi, it turned out that a small community of several hundred people had revived there. However, there were no Georgian Jews among them at all and it was the Mountain Jews who played the determining role in it, as well as Ashkenazi and several Krymchak families. Nobody knows what happened to the cemetery: most likely, it had fallen to desolation since a great number of graves turned out to be non-attended. The Derbent community has also lived, and is still living, through hard times, characterized by the mass escape exodus to Israel and to the interior of Russia, and by the aggravation of criminality directly affecting the Mountain Jewish communities. No less than half the Derbent community left the town during the past decade. For the first time ever, the town has no rabbi. One may suppose that the cemetery is also falling to desolation, since the number of not-attended graves is growing and the number of people capable of servicing funeral rites according to Jewish tradition is getting smaller.

No less dramatic are the changes in the Jewish part of Samarkand. Today, the Jewish population of the city is very small, because in the 1990s most of them left for the USA, Israel and for some other countries, including Austria and Germany. The Makhalya is now deserted, there are only a few Jewish families left huddling there and a synagogue, but soon even these last traces of the once-existed Jewish community will vanish. In Queens, NYC, there appeared, as if having been transferred there, the Samarkand Makhalya endeavoring to continue their community traditions in the USA.

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I guess there is now a Bukhara-Jewish cemetery in New York, an affiliate of the Samarkand one.

Today, one may suppose that the danger impending over the cemetery because of its proximity to the Afrasiab site is not as acute as it was before, since, in these worrying times, the Uzbek Republic has a lot more urgent problems to tackle than do archaeological excavations. But the danger of desolation of the Samarkand necropolis is still there. Although there are, virtually, no new burials in the cemetery, the international, Russian and the USA Bukhara-Jewish organizations continue to support the Samarkand Jewish cemetery as a significant monument of their heritage.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Бабаликашвили Н. И.* Еврейские надписи в Грузии (XVIII-XIX вв.). Тбилиси, 1971. Его же. О еврейских эпиграфических памятниках Кавказа // Семитологические штудии. Тбилиси, 1983. Выпуск 1. С. 112–139.

<sup>2</sup> *Zubin M.* Yehudey makhoz Samarkand bishnat 1979 (Евреи в округе Самарканда в 1979 г.) (иврит) // Пеамим 35. Йерушалаим, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> In May, 2004, A. Fedorchuk discovered in the Samarkand cemetery grave-stones belonging to the mid-19th century.

<sup>4</sup> *Гоберман Д. Н.* Еврейские надгробья на Украине и в Молдове. Серия «Шедевры еврейского искусства». Москва, 1993. С. 28.

## JEWISH CEMETERIES OF THE CRIMEA: HISTORY OF RESEARCH AND PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRES

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The Crimea is a unique region where destinies of different Jewish groups (from the Hellenized Jews living there in the beginning of the Common Era to the Ashkenazi Jews who appeared there after the peninsula was annexed to the Russian empire) got mixed up during two millenniums.

Crimean Karaites and Krymchaks (Turkic-speaking Rabbanites) are most interesting among sub-ethnic groups still present in the area. There is a lot of legends on their origins (especially concerning Karaites) appeared mostly during the last two centuries. Many of these legends were based on the epigraphic sources of the Karaite cemeteries. The largest of them is situated near the cave town of Chufut-Qaleh, close to Bakhchisaray city. It is called Josafath valley (as well as the necropolis near the Old City of Jerusalem).

Since late 18th century Chufut-Qaleh used to draw attention of many travellers. It was an outstanding Karaite collector of antiquities Abraham Firkowicz (1787 – 1874) who started regular investigations of the cemetery. As early as the autumn of the year 1839, after general-governor of Novorossia M.S. Vorontsov demanded information on the origins of Crimean Karaites, the local community sent Firkowicz and a young Karaite scholar Shlomo Beym to the first archaeographic expedition across the Crimea. Firkowicz suggested discovering proofs to the history of Karaites in ancient manuscripts which could be preserved in the *genizot* of Karaite and Rabbanite synagogues and at the old cemeteries of Chufut-Qaleh, Mangup, Theodosia and Eupatoria.

During the expedition they found 51 manuscripts and fragments and made copies of 58 tombstones inscriptions of Chufut-Qaleh and Mangup

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cemeteries. The most ancient tomb found Firkowicz dated to 640 C.E. According to him, one of the tombs was that of Isaak Sangari (8th cent. C.E.) who, according to the later Jewish tradition, converted the Khazarian Khagan to Judaism. The name of Sangari appeared first in Nahmanides' commentary on the book *Kuzari* by the great Jewish poet and philosopher Jehuda ha-Levi. A lot of manuscripts discovered by Firkowicz had colophons which contain information on the life of the Karaite communities during the first millennium of C.E.

In 1840, the materials were delivered by Firkowicz to the Odessa Society of History and Antiquities. It was at the same time that first doubts raised on the reliability of tombstones inscriptions copies made by Firkowicz. R. Shlomo Rappoport suggested that the inscription of Sangari was forged. In order to remove doubts Bezalel Stern, a celebre man of Jewish Enlightenment and director of Jewish school, was sent by the Odessa Society to the Crimea. He found copies by Firkowicz correct and discovered 7 more inscriptions dated by him to 598 – 1509, among them the stone with the inscription “Sangarit” (according to Stern, it was the name of Isaak Sangari's wife).

Firkowicz continued his research. In 1840–1841 he visited North Caucasus where he discovered many ancient manuscripts including the famous Majalis Document – a long colophon on a Biblical manuscript discovered in Majalis village near Derbent. This document became a corner stone of the concept by Firkowicz which was proved by other colophons on the manuscripts and epitaphs found by him. According to Firkowicz, Crimean Karaites' ancestors settled in the Crimea more than 500 years before C.E. and, therefore, they were not responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Due to the concept by Firkowicz, Russian Karaites in his lifetime were granted equal rights as other subjects of Russian Empire.

The concept reached wide audience via works by Russian authors of the 1840s. In 1843, the article was published in the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* under the title *The Karaite Jews* written by the Journal's editor A. Nadezhdin (according to the witness of A. Kunik) and based upon the stuff provided by B. Stern. The author after examining Firkowicz's findings came to a conclusion that “the Crimean Karaites and, therefore, the Karaites of Lithuania, Volhynia, and Galicia, who are descended from them, are offspring of that branch of the Jews who separated from their brothers in ancient times, even before the Babylonian Exile, and penetrated the territories of today's Russia from the depths of Central Asia”.

In 1846, a young orientalist V. Grigoryev showed doubt on Jewish origins of Crimean Karaites. He suggested that “they were not Jews but descendants

of those Turkic Khazars who, as we know, practiced the Law of Moses and held the Crimea in 8 – 11 cent.” It should be noticed that the story of the Khazar conversion to Judaism was considered legendary till 1820s when Arabic sources were published which proved in undisputable way Judaism of Khazars, henceforth romantic enthusiasm of Grigoryev in such circumstances could be understandable.

In 1843, Firkowicz worked on the cemetery of the cave town Mangup where he copied 66 epitaphs, the most ancient of them was dated by him to 871 C. E. In 1844 and in 1846 he continued exploration of the Josaphat valley necropolis, and in 1847, accompanied by his son-in-law Gabriel Firkowicz, he created the cemetery map, which was divided into “quarters”, and copied 703 epitaphs. He estimated the total number of tombstones as 6967, that fits the calculations made in 2004–2005.

In 1845, E. Pinner first published Firkowicz’s finds. In 1849 – 1850 Firkowicz visited Caucasus for the second time, and three years later he brought to St. Petersburg about 700 tombstones inscriptions copies, and almost 150 manuscripts. In 1856 he offered his collection to the Imperial Public Library. On March 7, 1862, the committee appointed by the Academy of Sciences submitted a report on value and original character of the collection, though doubt was thrown upon several colophons. On the 5th of October, 1862, the library purchased from Firkowicz about 1500 manuscripts, 754 tombstones inscriptions copies and 10 actual epitaphs sawed out by Firkowicz from the tombstones of the Josaphat valley. (Unfortunately, these inscriptions disappeared probably in 1941 during evacuation of the Hermitage collections, where they were seen four years before the war.) In 1863, the stuff sent by Firkowicz to the Odessa Society of History and Antiquities was delivered to the Public Library.

The majority of scholars who examined at that time the first Firkowicz’s collection confided absolutely in his finds. It would be enough to mention Adolf Neubauer and Daniel Chwolson, a professor of St. Petersburg University who issued in 1866 the book *Eighteen Jewish Tombstones Inscriptions from the Crimea*. The research by Chwolson, who examined some of the epitaphs discovered by Firkowicz and found them authentic, convinced even skeptics.

After having sold his collection 76 years-old Firkowicz travelled across the Middle East during 1.5 years. Since September 1863 till March 1865 he visited Turkey, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and collected there thousands of manuscripts. Most valuable among them were manuscripts from the *genizah* of Cairo Karaite synagogue and almost 1300 Samaritan manuscripts purchased by the Public Library in 1870. Firkowicz was occupied with sorting

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out all these stuff till the end of his life (they were purchased by the Library from the collector's descendants together with his personal archives in 1876). The second Firkowicz's collection contains nearly 12 thousand manuscripts and text fragments.

After coming back to Russia Firkowicz settled in Chufut-Qaleh where he sorted out his immense collections and continued investigations on the cemetery.

In 1872, he issued in Vilna a book entitled *Sefer avne zikkaron livne Israel. The Collection of Jewish tombstones inscriptions of the Crimean Peninsula collected by Karaite Scholar Abraham Firkowicz*. Besides the account of his travels, the author included in the book 769 epitaphs, among them 564 from Chufut-Qaleh (the ancient dated by Firkowicz to the 6th year C.E.), 72 from Mangup (since 866 C.E.), 28 from Kaffa (since 1076 C.E.), 5 from Solkhat (since 910 C.E.), 100 from Eupatoria (since 1593 C.E.).

Abraham Firkowicz died on June 30, 1874 and he was buried in Chufut-Qaleh at the ancient Josaphat valley cemetery.

After Firkowicz's death an intense polemic began about his legacy. The main participants were two major Russian Hebraists – Daniel Chwolsson (1819-1911) and Abraham Harkavy (1839-1919).

Chwolsson was born in a poor Jewish family in Vilna. He graduated from the University of Breslau and, in 1854, after he converted to Russian Orthodoxy, was offered the opportunity to head the department of Hebrew, Syriac, and Chaldean languages of the Oriental department at the St. Petersburg University. He was the first qualified Hebraist who had the opportunity to examine the materials collected by Firkowicz. In contrast to his colleague, Harkavy remained an Orthodox Jew all his life, and in the Russian Empire it could hardly promote his career opportunities. For example, when he applied for a position at the St. Petersburg University in 1870, he was rejected (an additional reason was apparently a negative evaluation by Chwolsson of Harkavy's master's dissertation). Harkavy then began working at the Imperial Public Library where, for half a century, he was, in effect, the curator of the Firkowicz Collection. From that point on, there was a long and overt hostility between the two scholars, which cast a shadow on their entire future polemics.

Almost immediately after Firkowicz's death, Harkavy was sent to the Crimea, along with the German Semitologist G. Strack, to evaluate the manuscripts of the *Second Firkowicz Collection*, which Firkowicz's heirs were offering to sell to the Public Library. After several months, the two scholars published a catalogue of the Biblical manuscripts from the Firkowicz collection:

many of the colophons of the manuscripts were revealed to be forged by Firkowicz in an attempt to prove that the ancestors of the Crimean Karaites had separated from the Jews before the birth of Jesus. A year later, Harkavy published a new work, where he affirmed that not only the colophons, but all the tombstone inscriptions, dated before 1240, were forged. In a number of articles Harkavy also critically analyzed specific documents from the Firkowicz's collection. Simultaneously with Harkavy's work, in publications by Kunik, Strack, and Efraim Deinard Firkowicz was accused of various kinds of forgery and falsification. However, these scholars attributed much of the responsibility for convincing the public of the authenticity of Firkowicz's finds to Chwolsson.

The latter, whose reputation in the scholarly world was severely damaged, decided to defend himself. He made two (in 1878 and 1881) extensive expeditions to the cemetery in Chufut-Qaleh and after that published a large monograph in which, with hardly any analysis of the manuscripts collected by Firkowicz, he focused on tombstone inscriptions from the Josaphat Valley. In addition to the inscriptions discovered by Firkowicz, Chwolsson found another forty epitaphs, the oldest of which he dated as between 240 and 613. In regard to the epitaphs collected by Firkowicz, Chwolsson revised his original ideas and admitted that a number of the texts had been falsified indeed. However, Chwolsson still considered many of the ancient epigraphs to be genuine, and rejected the manifold evidence adduced by Harkavy, Strack, and Kunik.

The polemics between Chwolsson and Harkavy (which sometimes went behind the boundaries of the academic dispute), though never finished, influenced the academic community which began to treat all Firkowicz finds with suspicion.

The activities of Firkowicz encouraged Russian Hebrew and Jewish studies during more than 150 years. The polemics about authenticity of his finds, nevertheless, continued. On the one hand, dubious materials from his collections sometimes are used in academic (and not only academic) polemics. On the other hand, the invaluable manuscripts in some cases are treated with suspicion *a priori*, just because they were found by Firkowicz.

For East European Karaites Firkowicz theories became vitally important. In the 19th century they supported Karaites' successful struggle for equal rights in the Russian Empire, but in the 20th their consequences became even more vital. For Firkowicz himself the Karaites undoubtedly were Jews, but the next generations of Karaite national movement, first and foremost, Seraya Shapshal (1873 – 1961), relying upon the theories by Firkowicz, Grigoryev, etc., elaborated the concept that East European Karaites are not Jews, but

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the descendants of the Khazars, who allegedly had been converted into the Karaite form of Judaism. This theory finally saved the Karaites: most of them were not exterminated during the Shoah.

After the events of 1917, the studies of Firkowicz' collections as well as the investigation of Crimean cemeteries were halted for a number of decades. Their work restarted only in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Episodic attempts of research at the cemeteries of Chufut-Qaleh and Mangup were made by M. Elizrova, N. Babalikhvili, E. Meshcherskaia, A. Khosroev, N. Kashovskaia, and M. Makushkin.

A new stage of Chufut-Qaleh cemetery investigations began in 1997, when the joint Israeli-Russian expedition was organized by Ben-Zvi Institute. In the following decade several small expeditions were held where Israeli, Russian, and Ukrainian scholars participated.

In 1998, the author of the present article discovered in Firkowicz's personal archives drafts of book *Avnei Zikkaron* by Firkowicz dated back to the late 1840s. The comparison of the drafts with the printed version of the book and the epitaphs preserved at the cemetery, showed evidently how the alteration of inscriptions was made (in particular, in the drafts there is a large number of altered inscriptions that were not included in the final, printed version of the book, and were found after Firkowicz's death by Chwolsson and Babalikhvili).

The results of the expeditions held in the 1990s were presented in the collective monograph written by a group of Israeli, Russian, and Ukrainian scholars (Dan Shapira, Artem Fedorchuk, Golda Achiezer, Michael Ezer, Michael Kizilov, Boris Khaimovich) *The Tombstones of the Cemetery of the Karaite Jews in Chufut-Qaleh (the Crimea)*, which was edited by Dan Shapira and published in September, 2008, by Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in The East in cooperation with the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies and the Center for the Integration of the Oriental Jewish Heritage of the Ministry of Education of Israel. The book deals with a wide spectrum of issues related to the Chufut-Qaleh necropolis.

However, the final solution of the issues of the correct inscriptions dating and the extent of epitaphs changes made by Firkowicz could not be given until the total documentation of Chufut-Qaleh and Mangup cemeteries is finished. This task has been fulfilled by a group of scholars organized by the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies, who carried out between 2004 and 2008 several epigraphic expeditions to the Crimea, funded by the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress and other foundations and organizations. During these expeditions the documentation of the relatively small Mangup

cemetery was finished (the basic work was done by Natalia Kashovskaya since 1990), and the complete documentation of Chufut-Qaleh cemetery was made. The catalogues of both cemeteries are presently being prepared for publication.

During several years since its creation, the Center held a series of expeditions in the Crimea, field schools, and seminars. Among them the Fall (October, 2004, October, 2005, October, 2006) and Spring (March, 2005, April, 2006) field schools for high school students, entitled “Jews and Surrounding World: Ethno-cultural Contacts”; expedition for Moscow high school students (May, 2005); summer field schools in Jewish Studies (August, 2005, July-August, 2006, July, 2007, July, 2008); student seminars held in cooperation with the Jewish Agency and *Hillel* (August, 2005, August and October, 2006, October, 2007), the field schools for *Taglit* students (July, 2006, July, 2007). One of the most interesting programs was the field seminar for Jewish school teachers and artists, organized in cooperation with the *New Jewish School* Pedagogical club and initiated by its director, the late Zakhar Rokhlin (1979–2009).

During all these programs the educational tasks were combined with the academic ones, i.e. with documentation of cemeteries (beside Chufut-Qaleh and Mangup, the smaller cemeteries of Eupatoria and Sebastopol were documented), as well as with archaeological and ethnological research.

In 2004 – 2005 a group led by Ivan Yurchenko, the director of Halyc Museum of Karaite History and Culture, made the complete topographic and partial photographic survey of Chufut-Qaleh necropolis. During the other expeditions of the Center all the inscriptions were cleaned, photographed and written down, the oldest of them were measured. Most of the expeditions were combined with the field schools and student seminars, where the experienced scholars and students taught the newcomers to describe the epitaphs (some of newcomers late joined the working team). For university and high school students it was a priceless experience of contact with Jewish culture. A possibility to participate in the work on description and salvation of the monuments definitely influenced for strengthening Jewish identity of the youngsters.

Between the expeditions a huge work on deciphering of the epitaphs text was made. In 2007 the interface of the electronic catalogue was created, by now it is filled up, and the editorial work on the text is close to an end.

The catalogue includes the electronic map of the necropolis, divided to squares. Each monument on the map, which bears the epitaph, is connected with all the information about it: original text, translation, text in Firkowicz's

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catalogue (if relevant), names, nicknames, patronymics, dates, eulogies, geographical names, mentioned in the epitaph, as well as the photographs, in some cases – measures of the tombstone, etc. There is also a complete plate of the architectural forms (in that respect the necropolis is also unique among all Jewish cemeteries of the world). The catalogue is supplied by the system of advanced search which permits to systematize the epitaphs according to many parameters, as well as in chronological and topographic order.

The total number of tombstones is approximately 7,000, almost 3,400 of them have epitaphs. Unfortunately, the cemetery is rapidly deteriorating. The oldest survived epitaphs date back to 1364 (the monument of Manush, the daughter of Shabbetai) and to 1387 (only the lower part of it has been preserved; including the altered date; a comparison with *Avnei Zikkaron* and the plan of the cemetery made by Firkowicz in mid 19th century lead us to assume that this inscription is probably that of Sarah, daughter of Abraham). The inscriptions on other monuments of the 14th century can no longer be read due to the poor condition, although some of them can be identified on the basis of Firkowicz's map. 25 epitaphs of the 15th century and 63 from the 16th century has been preserved<sup>1</sup>. From every of the next centuries (17th, 18th, and 19th) 800 – 1000 epitaphs survived; several hundred inscriptions could not be dated exactly because of poor conditions. The most recent burials at the cemetery took place in the mid 20th century.

All 27 survived tombstone inscriptions of the 14th – 15th centuries (8 of them were preserved only in copies made by Firkowicz and Chwolsson in place of epitaphs that had been sawed off) appear in Firkowicz's *Avney Zikkaron* (however, he dated 23 of them to much earlier periods). Out of the 564 inscriptions in *Avney Zikkaron*, more than 400 have survived. About 200 epitaphs were forged including 130 altered by transformation the letter ם in the date into ן, so an inscription becomes 600 years “older”. In other cases the dates were changed either by adding dots above the letters in the *chronostichs*, or by adding words and phrases. In most cases changes of this kind can be discerned by the naked eye.

For an example, let us take the epitaph of Hanukkah, the son of Mordechai, who was buried in the year 5237 from the Creation, i. e. 1477 C.E. Changing the letter ם into ן transforms the date to 637 from the Creation (according to the *defective calculation*, i. e. without millennium), but since 5637 corresponds to the year 1877 C.E., which had not yet arrived at the time that his book was published, Firkowicz dated the inscription to 877. In the final version of the book Firkowicz dated it, as he did with many other early epitaphs, even earlier (to 726), calculating this date according to the *ancient*

*Crimean* era, which allegedly was in use in the Crimea in the first millennium C. E., being 151 year longer than the regular era from the Creation of the World.

Firkowicz proves the existence of this mythical “era” with the help of the epitaph of Esther, daughter of Shelomo (real date – 1476). In the printed version of Firkowicz’s book, it has two dates: one according to the *ancient Crimean* era (it’s designated as the era *from the Creation*), and the other according to the so-called *Matharchean* (allegedly, this era was used by the Jews living in the city of Matarcha, on the Taman Peninsula in Russia, and was equal to the regular era *from the Creation*). But neither in the drafts of the *Avnei Zikkaron*, nor at the copy made by Firkowicz on the tombstone after the original inscription was sawed off, we can’t find any traces of the *Matharchean* era, and this is the undisputable pro of that the “Ancient Crimean” era was invented by Firkowicz.

As for the other era, allegedly used in the epitaphs, the era *from our exile* (according to Firkowicz, from the Samaritan exile, which he dated to 696 B.C.E.), out of the five epigraphs in which this term appears in *Avnei Zikkaron*, only one copy is preserved, made on the place of the sawed tombstone inscription of Buqi, son of Isaak Kohen, allegedly the most ancient epitaph at the cemetery (702 *from our exile*, i.e., according to Firkowicz, 6 C.E.). But, analyzing Firkowicz’s drafts, we can see that the epitaph of Buqi was changed several time. In the draft of the only inscription which allegedly had the double dating (Joseph, son of Elia; according to Firkowicz, 369 C.E.), the date *from our exile* is absent, and there is only the date *from the Creation of the World*. Thus, we come to conclusion that the era *from our exile* in reality never existed.

In some epitaphs the date is indicated not in a linear manner but by the *chronostichs*, most commonly by Biblical excerpts, some letters of which are marked (usually by dots above the letters). The date is found by combining the numerical values of the marked letters. In a number of cases Firkowicz added additional dots to the *chronostich* in order to alter the date by several centuries. For example, in the epitaph of Abraham, the son of Simkhah, he put an additional dot over the letter ן so that the date “moved backwards” from 1573 to 873.

Sometimes Firkowicz did not make changes in the date itself but simply, in cases when the date was indicated according to the *defective calculation*, changed the millennium in the book. For example, the epitaph of Jacob, the son of Josef, who died in 1535 (the text indicates the year 295 from the Creation of the World) is dated by Firkowicz to 535.

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Occasionally, Firkowicz required a more inventive correction of the text to change the date. Unfortunately, the majority of inscriptions which allegedly belong to the fifth millennium and where the date is indicated in words or letters have not been preserved. However, a number of the examples show how the dates were altered. For example, in the 1430 epitaph of Mordechai, the son of Daniel the letter ן (signifying 5000), is transformed by the alteration of its lower vertical part into the two-letter combination לך (signifying 4000).

Very seldom Firkowicz seems to chisel completely new tombstone inscriptions, especially short ones. These, for example, were the cases with the famous epitaphs of “Isaak Sangari” (the original inscription was sawed off), “Sangarit”, and, most likely, with the epitaph of Buqi, the son of Itshak Kohen. Several epitaphs published in *Avney Zikkaron* apparently did not exist in the cemetery but appeared either in the book or in the drafts.

Henceforth, the analysis of the whole amount of survived epitaphs from Chufut-Qaleh cemetery lets finally solve the issue of the real dates of this monument of great historical value. The same point could relate to smaller in size Mangup cemetery, where 222 out of one thousand tombstones have epitaphs dated back to the mid-15th – the late 18th cent. Several dozens of them were made 600 years “older” by Firkowicz who turned the letter ן into ן.

Investigations of numerous colophons from Firkowicz manuscripts collection conducted in the last years have also proved that several dozens of them were either modified or composed by the collector himself. For example, review of the Majalis Document shows that the author was aware of Russian literature on the subject of the first half of the 19th century. At the same time, accusation of forging manuscripts themselves against Firkowicz could be considered groundless (with one possible exception which is mentioning Mangup in the so-called long version of the letter of Khazarian king Joseph discovered by Firkowicz during his trip to the Middle East in 1863 – 1865).

As the material of Chufut-Qaleh epitaphs is now available for scholars, it made possible to finish the “Firkowicz affair” which existed for about 150 years, and to establish the real time when Karaite communities appeared in Crimea (mid-14th century in Chufut-Qaleh, and mid-15th century in Mangup). Working on this data gives scholars a unique opportunity to study the life of Crimean Karaites in details during 500 years and to clarify various aspects of history and culture not only of other Karaite communities, but of East European Jewry as well.

Documentation methods invented for Chufut-Qaleh electronic catalogue could be used for cataloging other Jewish cemeteries. For the last 20 years, a lot of materials of Jewish cemeteries of Ukraine have been collected, but up

till now a little part of it is used by scholars. It's understandable since handling collected stuff is hard and routine work.

Nowadays we face a unique situation, i. e., we have a team of experts, detailed methods of documenting cemeteries, and technical possibility to do such work. Unfortunately, Jewish cemeteries get destroyed terribly fast, and scrupulous description of everything which is still present is the only way to save these unique monuments of the Jewish culture for the generations to come.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> To compare: in all the Jewish cemeteries of Western Ukraine only less than 20 epitaphs of the 16th century have been preserved, the oldest one (from 1521) being in the city of Busk.

## OLD JEWISH CEMETERIES IN UKRAINE: HISTORY, MONUMENTS, EPITAPHS

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### **1. Introduction**

A traveler arriving to Ukraine today is scarcely reminded of the Jews. However, the Jewish civilization with its distinctive culture, language, literature, and spiritual quests, so different from the surrounding population, has thrived here for over five centuries. The Chassidic movement, which went on to influence Judaism worldwide, originated and got strong on the territory of Ukraine. It appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the town of Medzhibozh in Podolia<sup>1</sup>; major Chassidic courts existed in Mezherich, Ruzhin, Sadigor, Polonny, Berdichev, Uman, Chernobyl, and dozens of other places. The religious sect of the Frankists appeared in Podolia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, building upon the pseudo-messianic movement of Shabtay Tsvi. Brody, Lemberg (Lvov), Kremenets, and Ternopol were major centers of the Haskala: the Jewish Enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ukraine was a borderline territory where the cultures of the East and the West met: those of Poland, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Russia, and Turkey. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a peculiar cultural atmosphere had formed in the Jewish communities of Odessa, Lvov, Berdichev, Chernovtsy, and Carpathian and Transcarpathian cities. There were variations of Ashkenazi culture and dialects of Yiddish in Podolia and Volyn, Galicia, Bukovina, Transcarpathia, Chernigov and Poltava regions, Kherson and Taurida provinces<sup>2</sup>.

The events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the revolution and the Holocaust with the Nazis carrying out mass destruction of the majority of the Jewish population, modernization, mass migration to large cities, and emigration – led to the collapse of the traditional Jewish shtetl with its social structure, which used to be the foundation of Ashkenazi culture, to mass assimilation

and loss of the Jewish language and culture, to loosing the role of the religion and the traditional way of life. The Jewish population on the territory of Ukraine shrank almost 10 times over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the percentage of people who considered Yiddish their mother tongue falling from 90 percent in the beginning of the century to 10 percent at its end. An elderly person with a good memory of the pre-war shtetl, its lifestyle and customs, is now easier to find in Tel Aviv or in Brooklyn than in the shtetls themselves. The material monuments of Jewish culture and art: books, manuscripts, scrolls, synagogue utensils – are also frequently far removed from their places of origin.

There is, however, a class of monuments which remains numerous in the places where the Ashkenazi civilization once thrived. These are the carved gravestones of the Jewish cemeteries, bearing epitaphs, usually in Hebrew, and often decorated with carved images. Besides the fact that the gravestones are extent en masse, allowing for generalizations, they are important also for another reason. The epitaphs contain important genealogical and historical information. Some of them are real literary monuments, belonging to a still little-researched genre. The carved decor of 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century monuments showcases Jewish decorative and applied art with its own distinct style. These monuments are in an intermediate position between the official, bookish rabbinic cultural tradition and folk Judaism; between lofty authors' culture and mass culture. By examining gravestones which have been affected by non-Jewish influences, but are still a self-sufficient phenomenon in Ashkenazi culture, one can research the general and the particular in Jewish civilization. The generality of the material makes it convenient for all kinds of sociological research on the gender and social stratification of the Jewish community.

This article will discuss the history of the research on the Jewish cemeteries in Ukraine, the role of the cemeteries in the lives of Jewish communities, traditional Jewish epitaphs, their structure and contents, and the carved gravestone decor. Included also is a survey of the most interesting ancient Jewish cemeteries.

## **2. History of Jewish gravestone research in Ukraine**

Several stages can be outlined in the research of cemeteries and gravestones. Jewish historians, affiliated to the Haskala movement, paid attention to Hebrew epitaphs in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were

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interested in learning (and to a significant extent, writing and describing) the history of the Jewish people as an independent nation, and therefore – various Jewish sources, including epitaphs. Many authors at that time published their works in Hebrew, considering it the national language of the Jewish people, the required medium for developing cultural and scholarly activity. Examples of such work are publications in the Measef collection (St. Petersburg, 1902) of articles on epitaphs in Berdichev and other communities<sup>3</sup>. S. Baber published a collection of Lvov epitaphs in 1895<sup>4</sup>, M. Biber published inscriptions from Ostrog (Volyn) in 1907<sup>5</sup>. These early publications did not always uphold the standards of scholarly epitaph analysis, sometimes allowing in simply unreliable information, drawn from legends<sup>6</sup>. In the 1890s a circle of Jewish intelligentsia, interested in developing and publishing studies in Jewish history in Russian was formed in St. Petersburg. These were lawyers, doctors, writers, who had obtained higher education despite the percentage limitations, and were now feeling discriminated by the government. They formed a committee on Jewish history studies, which grew into the Jewish Historic-Ethnographic Society of St. Petersburg (JHES), established in 1907<sup>7</sup>. Separated from the traditional Jewish environment, these people saw historical research as the basis of national identification.

The JHES and scholars close to it published the magazine *Evreyskaya Starina* (the Old Jewish Times)<sup>8</sup>, and carried out quite a few editions like *Regesty i Nadpisi* (Regests and Inscriptions) and the Jewish Encyclopedia in Russian. S.A. An-sky (Rapoport) led ethnographic expeditions to Ukraine. The idea was that learning Jewish folklore, folk life, and folk art would inspire artists, writers, and musicians, and help to create a national Jewish style. In 1920, the artists S. Yudovin and M. Malkin published an album called *Jewish National Ornament*, based on the material of carved ornamented gravestones<sup>9</sup>. Later, the Jewish gravestones of Ukraine and Moldova were researched and photographed for many years since pre-war times by D.N. Goberman<sup>10</sup>. Gravestone motives have found their way into the work of such artists as E. Lisitsky, N. Altman, Anatoly (Tankhum) Caplan, who had turned to these monuments in search of a national style.

During the inter-war period Western Ukraine was divided between the Soviet Union (whose borders covered Podolia, most of Volyn, and Eastern Galicia – after 1939), Poland (Western Galicia and Western Volyn), Czechoslovakia (Transcarpathia), and Romania (Bukovina). In that time, a series of works were published in Poland on the gravestone inscriptions in Lvov, Galich, and other places<sup>11</sup>.

During WWII most of the Jewish communities on the territories under German occupation were destroyed, and refugees from these communities had found themselves in Israel or America, where expat communities from Ukraine's shtetls and cities were beginning to form. One of the work elements of such communities is publishing Yizkor books (usually in Hebrew, sometimes – in Yiddish and other languages), telling the stories of the communities and the victims of the Nazis. Such memorial books contain descriptions of cemeteries, sometimes even epitaphs<sup>12</sup>.

In post-war years certain Western and Israeli historians turned to Ukrainian Jewish epitaphs for their publications<sup>13</sup>. However, because of low material accessibility (it was quite challenging for a Western scholar to get to the USSR, and even more challenging – to organize field research), there are not many such publications, and they are not systematic. At the same time, Jewish cemeteries in the countries of Western (and later Central) Europe – Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary – were researched much more intensively<sup>14</sup>.

With the perestroika, Jewish public activities became possible in the USSR, as well as work on Jewish history, including field research of Jewish cemeteries. This work was carried out since the late 1980s by the St. Petersburg Jewish University (known since 1998 as the St. Petersburg Institute for Jewish Studies), led by Ilya Dvorkin, Boris Khaimovitch, Valery Dymshits<sup>15</sup>. All of the most interesting and oldest Jewish cemeteries of Ukraine were documented over the course of the 1990s: those in Medzhibozh, Satanov, Podgaitsy, Brody, Busk, Yablono, Pechenezhin, Kremenets, Vizhnitsa, Murafa, and others. In a series of works published in the following years, B. Khaimovitch researched the carved decor of the gravestone (*matseva*) as a phenomenon of the Jewish folk art. He showed that this art has a specific style and graphic language<sup>16</sup>. My own work regarded epitaphs as historical sources and at the same time, a literary phenomenon on the borderline between traditional and folk literature and culture<sup>17</sup>. While collections of gravestone epigraphy as a historic source have been published since a very long time ago, the genre of the Jewish epitaph of the medieval and early modern centuries has remained poorly researched; this is concerning not just the Ukrainian region, but Jewish epitaphs in general as well.

Western (most importantly, American) researchers are interested in the Jewish cemeteries of Eastern Europe for two main reasons. First, Jewish cemeteries can be sources of genealogical information and serve descendants looking for their ancestors' graves. The most extensive project of this sort is being carried out by the Jewish Genealogical Society, whose website provides material on many shtetls within the Pale of Settlement, including their

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cemeteries<sup>18</sup>. Also interested in Jewish cemeteries is the International Survey of Jewish Monuments in the USA<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, genealogical projects are being undertaken by individual enthusiasts.

Secondly, the graves of Chassidic rabbis and righteous people are places of pilgrimage for today's Chassidim. Guidebooks and albums are made for the pilgrims, containing descriptions of the burial sites of the righteous<sup>20</sup>. Such publications usually pay little heed to Jewish cemeteries as such, concentrating only on the graves of the righteous.

Interest towards studying Jewish cemeteries has been growing over the past years in independent Ukraine. A little book called *Jewish Necropolises of Ukraine*<sup>21</sup>, by Khodorkovsky, was published in 1998. 2001 saw the publication in Vinnitsa of a description of the Jewish cemeteries in two Chassidic shtetls, Chernobyl and Gornostayevka. This was supposed to be the first issue in the *Jewish Necropolises of Ukraine* series<sup>22</sup>.

Research of Jewish epigraphy in the Crimea is a separate case. Jewish epigraphy has been known here since the Hellenistic period, and there are medieval inscriptions in Hebrew in the Necropolises of Chufut-Kale and Mangup, as well as later inscriptions elsewhere, belonging to the ethno-confessional groups of Crimean Karaites or Krymchak Jews<sup>23</sup>. These monuments have been intensively researched in recent years; they have to do with a number of very complicated historical problems, and are therefore not the object of the present study.

### **3. The cemetery in the Jewish community**

Jews have inhabited the Northern Black Sea Region since at least the first century AD. The first Jewish communities were formed in the Greek colonies in the Crimea and on the coast of the Sea of Azov<sup>24</sup>. Mentions of Jews and Jewish communities in the following centuries are related one way or another to the Khazar Empire whose rule extended to a significant part of Ukraine over the first millennium AD. However, mass Jewish settlement on this territory is linked to the arrival of Ashkenazi Jews from Poland and Central Europe. The first Ashkenazi communities were established in the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries in Volyn. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century Jewish communities had been formed in many towns in Galicia, Podolia, and Volyn, and that is also when the oldest Jewish cemeteries with monuments still standing today appeared.

A cemetery is the second most important object of a community's interest, after the synagogue. Wherever a community would form, it would try to find a lot for a cemetery, referred to in literature as *Beys-Oylom*<sup>25</sup> (Home of

Eternity), or *Beys-Khayim* (Home of Life: apparently, a euphemism for “home of the dead” with a hint to the eternal life of the soul). Usually the lot would be outside the shtetl, sometimes several kilometers away. The cemetery would often be situated on a riverbank, on top of a hill or at its slope. The Burial Society, *Khevra Kadisha*, was responsible for performing funerals and keeping the cemetery. There was often an ablution house next to the cemetery.

The Jewish religion requires the funeral to be performed, if possible, on the day of death. When the day of death falls on a Saturday, the funeral will be postponed until the next day. The cemetery must not be visited on a Saturday, or after dark. Close relatives must mourn for seven days (*shiva*). A milder level of mourning continues for thirty days (*shloshim*), then a year. According to the Talmud (*Shabbat* 152b), the soul drifts between the earth and heaven for a year after the death, constantly returning to the grave<sup>26</sup>. After the year has elapsed, and the body has fully decomposed, the soul finds repose in heaven. It is customary to remember the dead on the anniversary of their demise by the Jewish calendar.

The time in the grave is considered temporary. The arrival of the Messiah will signal resurrection, bodies will grow flesh and rise from the graves. It is important to meet the Messiah in the Holy Land (i.e., Palestine, the Land of Israel), and it is therefore preferable to be buried there. This was rarely possible in practice, but the area of the cemetery was symbolically equated to that of Israel. The notion of “holy space” has a certain hierarchy in Judaism, the Land of Israel being holier than other countries, Jerusalem – more sacred than other places in the Land of Israel, the Temple Mount – the holiest site in Jerusalem, and the place where the Holy of Holies used to be – the holiest part of the Temple Mount. Graves themselves are not holy, in fact, they are ritually impure. There were special requirements to the ritual purity of the Cohanim, the priests, and they were therefore banned from cemeteries. However, according to some cabbalistic sources, the soul of the deceased is easier to contact next to their grave, and thus the burial places of righteous people became perceived as holy. It became very popular in Chassidism to visit the graves of *tzaddikim* – righteous people and Chassidic leaders. Burial vaults (*oyhels*) were built on those graves, with people going on pilgrimages to them, praying next to them, and leaving notes (*kvitlakh*) with wishes on them.

Cemeteries were organized in different ways. Usually, the rows of graves were oriented southwards; the graves themselves were placed “head” west, in order for the resurrected dead to be facing east (where the Holy Land was traditionally held to be) as they rose from the graves and could directly be on

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their way to Jerusalem. However, deviations from this principle can be found, including differently oriented rows inside one cemetery. Some cemeteries had special female quarters<sup>27</sup> or sections for Cohanim. There were, it seems, also sections for illegitimate children, persons who committed suicides, etc.

There are many legends and superstitions pertaining to the Jewish cemetery, both on the part of Jews and Ukrainians. For example, the legends of the Medzhibozh cemetery are collected in the Jewish Fairytales<sup>28</sup>. There were local cemetery legends in Shargorod, Murafa, and other shtetls<sup>29</sup>.

The gravestones are most commonly shaped like stelae (*matzeva*) of sandstone or limestone (less commonly – granite and marble). There are also sarcophagi and obelisks; “boot”-type gravestones can be found in South-Eastern Volyn – a sarcophagus combined with a column in a single peculiarly shaped stone.

### 4. Ukraine’s old cemeteries today

There are hundreds of Jewish cemeteries in Ukraine. Each, obviously, deserves to be protected regardless of its historical and cultural value. The functioning cemeteries of today’s Jewish communities are protected by law. However, most Jewish communities ceased to exist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and many cemeteries were fully or partially destroyed: some under Nazi occupation<sup>30</sup>, more in the years of Soviet rule, when Jewish cemeteries were not considered culturally valuable and were often replaced by parks, stadiums, enterprises, and residential neighborhoods. The old Jewish cemeteries of Lvov, Ostrog, Dubno (Rovno oblast), and Kolomiya (Ivano-Frankovsk oblast) have been completely destroyed, their priceless epigraphic data irretrievably lost<sup>31</sup>. Stones from the cemetery are often used by the locals as construction material<sup>32</sup>.

This review will be focused on cemeteries of the biggest historical and cultural value. The earliest gravestone preserved on the territory of Ukraine is dated to 1520 and is found in Busk (Lvov oblast)<sup>33</sup>. There are 16<sup>th</sup> century monuments in Busk (Lvov oblast), Medzhibozh, Satanov (Khmelnitsky oblast), Buchach, Skala-Podolskaya, and Vishnevet (Ternopol oblast); 17<sup>th</sup> century ones are found in Podgaitsy, Kremenets (Ternopol oblast), Bolekhov (Ivano-Frankovsk oblast), Nemirov (Lvov oblast), Murafa, Tarnorud, Trostyans (Vinnitsa oblast), and Korets (Rovno oblast)<sup>34</sup>; several dozens of cemeteries contain 18<sup>th</sup> century monuments. Below are brief descriptions of six most fascinating necropolises.

**Medzhibozh (Khmelnitsky oblast).** The old Jewish cemetery (as opposed to the new one, functional in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries) is located on

a hill by the river, a kilometer away from the center of the settlement. At the time of documentation in 1990, there were approximately 200 gravestones on the area of 120x75 meters. The oldest (apparently, reused) gravestone is dated 1555, the next – 1708, and the final – 1853. The time gap between the first and the second burial testifies to the damage wrecked upon the community by Khmel'nitchina. The founder of Chassidim Yisroel Baal Shem Tov – Besht (1760) – and his fellows are buried in Medzhibozh, so the cemetery has become a place of pilgrimage for Chassidim arriving from various countries. A burial vault with an awning has been erected over the graves of the righteous. Many people claim that Hershele Ostropoler, the famous Jewish joke character, was put to rest in Medzhibozh<sup>35</sup>. The inscriptions and carvings on the gravestones are varied, detailed, and quite tasteful.

**Satanov (Khmelnitsky oblast).** The cemetery is situated on the bank of the river Zbruch close to the center of the town, and contains approximately 2000 gravestones, 720 of which belong to the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries; the oldest monument is dated 1576. The carved decor is especially varied and meticulously elaborate; the epitaphs are varied as well, containing numerous biblical quotations, which makes Satanov one of the most curious old Jewish cemeteries in Ukraine.

**Bolekhov (Ivano-Frankovsk oblast).** The cemetery area of ~100x200 m is located on a hill south from the center of the town. Four 17<sup>th</sup> century gravestones remain, the oldest being from 1648. Standing out from the other gravestones are several monuments from the rabbinic dynasty of Horovits and the gravestones of Dov-Ber Birkenthal and his wife Leah.

**Brody (Lvov oblast)**<sup>36</sup>. The cemetery is on the northern edge of the town, two kilometers away from the center, and occupies a territory of about 150 by 350 meters, with 2-3 thousand gravestones. It was founded in 1831, when a cholera epidemic took away many lives. There used to be an older cemetery in the city as well, destroyed in the Soviet years. In the eastern part of the cemetery stands the mausoleum (*oyhel*) of *tzaddik* Khaim Dovid ben Yosef (1931) and his wife Gitl. The gravestones are very closely spaced. The first rows belong to the local rich dynasties: Rokeakh, Margolis, Kallir, Horovits. Many of the epitaphs are written in verse and the texts are peculiar.

**Buchach (Ternopol oblast).** The Jewish cemetery is to the north of the town center, next to Torgovaya Street, on a hill by the river Strypa. The old part (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> cent.) is covered with trees and has about 300 monuments on the area of 80 by 130 meters, including four gravestones from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (the oldest of these dated 1587) and 26 from the 17<sup>th</sup>, including some from the Cossack uprising of 1648. Next is the 20<sup>th</sup> century section.

**Vishnevents (Ternopol oblast).** The old Jewish cemetery is 60x40 meters large and sits on a slope by the edge of old town – today’s downtown. Documentation in 1992 found the cemetery partly destroyed, but about 400 gravestones and fragments had survived. One of the monuments is dated 1583; seven belong to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Historically and artistically interesting gravestones have also been preserved in Kosov, Kutuy, Pechenezhin, Yablonov (Ivano-Frankovsk oblast), Gorodok, Derazhnya, Kupin, Smotrich (Khmelnitsky oblast), Podgaitsey, Skala-Podolskaya (Ternopol oblast), Veliky Berezny, Vinogradov, Golubiny, Uzhgorod, Khust (Transcarpathia oblast), Busk, Nemirov (Lvov oblast), Murafa, Trostyanets (Vinnitsa oblast), Banilov, Vizhnitsa (Chernovtsy oblast), Korets (Rovno oblast), and elsewhere.

### 5. Traditional Hebrew epitaphs

Contents of epitaphs are not stipulated by the Jewish religion. Moreover, the sages of the Talmud questioned the necessity of a gravestone altogether, as this custom reminded them of idol worship<sup>37</sup>. Still, a tradition of Jewish epitaphs had formed both in Europe and the Orient by the end of the first millennium. While not stipulated by the religion, the contents of the epitaphs, naturally, reflected in traditional Jewish values and ideas<sup>38</sup>.

The main purpose of the traditional Jewish epitaphs is, in our view, mystical. It is to help the soul of the deceased find repose in heaven and join the other souls of the Jewish people. It is no coincidence that one of the euphemisms for “died” is “joined [his/her people]”, and the phrase “let his/her soul be bound in the Bundle of Life [with the souls of our forefathers and the righteous]” has become a required part of any epitaph. The Jewish epitaph puts the deceased in the context of Jewish history, compares and matches him/her with the biblical heroes and patriarchs. At the same time it enumerates his/her virtues for the heavenly court to reckon. To a certain extent, a eulogistic epitaph (*melitza*) is in itself the guardian angel (*ha-melitz*), testifying before God the merits of the deceased.

This is the radical difference of the Jewish epitaph from the antique and Christian ones, which are usually addressed to passers-by or accidental readers, reminding them of life’s futility and encouraging them to repent<sup>39</sup>. Even if the Jewish epitaph is addressed to a living reader, it hardly ever contains a didactic motif: the assumption is that by reading it the passer-by will have said a prayer in memory of the deceased. These features of the Jewish epitaph define its contents and structure.

### 5.1. Language

Traditional epitaphs are written in Hebrew. Non-Hebrew inclusions are rare, with the exception of standard Aramaic expressions. There are scarcely any Yiddish epitaphs, as Yiddish was the household language and epitaphs were not meant for idle reading<sup>40</sup>. However, the language of the epitaphs is quite peculiar. It is not living Biblical Hebrew; rather, it is a set of given formulae. In the scheme of “internal” (Hebrew/Yiddish) Jewish bilingualism, Hebrew (*loshn-koydesh*) was the language of Scriptures and their realities, while Yiddish (*mameloshn*) served as the household language, suitable for describing everyday life. The Hebrew text of the epitaphs helped place the deceased into the context of the Scriptures. Having said that, the Yiddish, in which the creators of the inscriptions thought, is discernible through this Hebrew. Whenever they needed to refer to a phenomenon with no equivalent in the holy writ, e.g., a toponym or a surname, they would switch to the typical Yiddish orthography, using letter *‘ayin* for the [e] sound, *alef* for [a] and [o], etc.<sup>41</sup>

Later epitaphs (late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> cent.) can be bilingual or composed completely in a language other than Hebrew: Russian, Polish, or German in Galicia and Bukovina; Hungarian in Transcarpathia; Romanian in Bukovina; or Yiddish. The cemetery in Kutu features the Yiddish introductory phrase *דא ליגט* (*do ligt*, here lies); the meaning of this usage is not entirely clear, but is obviously linked to the function of marker epitaph.

In the Soviet period knowledge of Hebrew gradually dwindled, and the 1920s saw the appearance of epitaphs in Russian, sometimes even Ukrainian. As a rule, the initial Hebrew abbreviation פ”נ (here lies) was preserved in these; the final blessing formula sometimes stayed as well.

### 5.2. Structure and functions

Each epitaph has four obligatory elements:

1) Introductory formula (פה נטמן – here lies; זה המצבה של – this is the gravestone of [so-and-so]). Often contains allusions to such biblical verses as Gen. 35:20, Gen. 31:52, I Kings 23:17, etc.<sup>42</sup>

2) Name of the deceased in its “official form” – “so-and-so, son/daughter of such-and-such”. The “official name” was the name used to call one to the Torah; it was used in the *ketubbah* (wedding contract) or the *get* (divorce document). The “title” or polite form of address, such as “reb/rabbi” or “our teacher rabbi” comes before the name. These labels would eventually depreciate, leading to increasingly pompous, often tautological sets of titles. רבי (*rabbi*) could refer to virtually any adult man. In order to distinguish a learned person, the tautological הרב רבי (*ha-rav, rabbi*) appears, soon to be

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devaluated and replaced with the abbreviation מוהר"ר (*moharar – moreynu ha-rav, rabbi*; our teacher, the rav, rabbi)<sup>43</sup>. Later (19<sup>th</sup> cent.) monuments feature even ה"ה מוהר"ר (*hah moharar – ha-rav, rabbi, moreynu ha-rav, rabbi*). If the buried was an unmarried young man, he is referred to as בָּחור; a young woman as בתולה; a boy as ילד. The name of the deceased is followed by the name of their father and frequently the name of the husband in the case of woman. The name of the father is followed by ז"ל (blessed be his memory), if he is already gone, or יצ"ו (let him be protected by the Stronghold and Savior), if he is still alive. All of the above are standard Talmudic formulae.

Surnames are scarcely used in traditional epitaphs. Most Ukrainian Jews received surnames in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but only used them for outside purposes, in relations with the government, and they are therefore not featured in community documents and epitaphs. Family nicknames and noble rabbinic family names such as Babat, Byk, Margolis, Khayes, etc. form an exception. In Galicia, e.g., in Brody, surnames were brought into use earlier and are featured more prominently.

The name is also preceded by a brief (or in some cases quite verbose) description of the virtues of the deceased. The most typical version, וישר תם (a pure and honest man) is derived from the book of Job. Female gravestones have אשה חשובה וצנועה (sometimes נכבדה) (an important and modest/respected woman). Authors of epitaphs excel in variations of laudatory formulae, often including in the epitaph a biblical verse about a character of the same name.

1) Date of death by the Jewish calendar. The date is preceded by the words “passed away”; often a euphemism is used, such as “was called to the heavenly assembly”. The year is usually given “by the short count”, i.e., omitting the millennium. The date is often duplicated in a chronogram – a biblical verse with certain letters (acting also as numbers) highlighted to denote the date.

2) Final formula – eulogy. Virtually every epitaph is concluded with the abbreviation הנצב"ה (let his/her soul be bound in the Bundle of Life). This blessing formula is borrowed from the memorial prayer *Yizkor*, the full phrase being: “Let his soul be bound in the Bundle of Life together with the souls of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, and other righteous ones.” The Talmud says these are the words the angels say as they welcome the souls of righteous people ascending to heaven. This expression is based on a biblical verse, unrelated to death or the afterlife. This illustrates an important principle of the epitaph: biblical material is not adopted directly; instead, it is derived from its interpretation in rabbinic

literature. As for the expression “Bundle of Life”, M. Foygelman conclusively showed that it is understood in rabbinic literature as the “Throne of Glory” where human souls come from and where righteous souls return once their stay on earth is over<sup>44</sup>.

A similar rather rigid structure is associated with the functional purpose of the epitaph and the gravestone in general. Firstly, the gravestone serves to mark the burial spot, which must be marked to avoid accidental entry into the zone of impurity (which is forbidden, for example, to the *Cohanim*). Also, according to some notions, the soul keeps returning to the grave for a year (until the body fully decomposes), and it is easier to contact it there. This utilitarian function of the gravestone is reflected in the first element of the epitaph – the introductory formula. The second function is related to the notion of the epitaph as a prayer, which is the reason for the numerous blessings in epitaphs. A prayer epitaph must testify to the merits of the deceased and promote an acquittal by the Highest Court. Moreover, the epitaph links the soul of the deceased to the other souls of the Jewish people, placing him in the context of Jewish history. This is why the name and date are played upon and a biblical analogy is used, highlighting the similarities between the death of a particular Jacob or Rachel and the Jacob and Rachel of the Bible. The unity of place, date, and name provides for the unification of three coordinate systems: space, time, and individuality<sup>45</sup>. Jewish epitaphs are almost always impersonal, written in the third person, and not addressed to the reader. Deviations from this rule are perceived as unusual and are, perhaps, caused by external influences.

### *5.3. The epitaph as a literary phenomenon in the context of rabbinic literature*

The question of the correlation between Jewish epitaphs and other literary genres is quite interesting. There is in rabbinic literature a genre called *hesped* – a lamentation or mourning over the dead. Examples of *esped* can be found in the Talmud (*Mo’ed Qatan* 25-28). Epitaphs echo the typical images and expressions of *hesped*: description of the deceased person’s virtues and the family’s grief.

Poetic epitaphs of several verses were popular in many communities. These poems are usually quite primitive and monotonous: their contents emphasize the virtues of the deceased and the grief of the relatives; their form employs the same set of elementary, frequently grammatical, rhymes. The name of the deceased is often shaped into an acrostic. Poetic epitaphs were especially common in Galician communities like Brody, which had

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contacts with Jewish centers in Central and Western Europe. These poetic epitaphs, while a separate genre, compare to some extent to the genre of *qina* (lamentation, elegy<sup>46</sup>) in the traditional genre system of medieval Jewish poetry. This genre is parallel to the elegy (*ritha*) in the Arabic *qasidah*, known since pre-Islamic times, but it is related in Jewish tradition to the book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah and to early liturgical poetry. Unlike Arabic poetry, the Jewish *kina* (as well as texts in other genres) was formed by combination of biblical quotes and expressions in the so-called “mosaic style”.

The problem of uncertain authorship arises with poetic epitaphs. They were often custom-created by semi-professional authors relying on pre-existing material, combining fragments of previous epitaphs to adjust them to the situation at hand. There are also known cases of a particular person compiling an epitaph<sup>47</sup>.

Another significant genre is called *melitza* (praise or rhetoric). Colorful laudations consisting of biblical and Talmudic expressions are typically found, e.g., in prefaces to books published at that time. Sometimes the epitaph itself would be referred to as *melitza* in relation to a guardian angel, i.e., the epitaph playing the part of an angel giving evidence in the heavenly court in favor of the deceased.

Biblical quotes are numerous in epitaphs and are usually meant to emphasize the similarity of a particular death to an archetypal situation described in the Bible. Verses are often quoted about a character of the same name as the late person. Upon locating and identifying a biblical quote, a researcher might be tempted to stop at pointing out that the epitaph is quoting a certain verse from the Bible. However, the case may be more complicated than that; the quotes and allusions – indirect. The blessing formula “may his soul be bound in the Bundle of Life” is based on the biblical verse “but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God” (1 Samuel 25:29), where the matter is not death, but quite the opposite – protection of a living person. This quote appears in epitaphs because it is featured in the common prayer *Yizkor*, which in turn is based on an interpretation of the “Bundle of Life” in rabbinic literature.

In other cases a quote in an epitaph can be stimulated by some literary text. For example, the epitaph of Miryam from Buchach (1792) uses a slightly modified quote: *ויקה מרים את הטוב בידה*, “And Miryam took welfare (*tov*) in her hand” (Ex. 15:20). The original says *tof*, a tambourine. The same play on words is found in the epitaph of a different Miryam in Warsaw, which makes it less likely to have been invented by the compiler of the epitaph and more likely to have been borrowed from a common source. In the same way the

Aramaic expression *פרוותא דמשמחגי* (*parvuta de-Mashmakhig*; the harbor of Mashmakhig) is found in epitaphs from Medzhibozh (1751) and Satanov (1759). In Talmud (*Yoma 77a*) the harbor of Mashmakhig is mentioned as a certain site in the Persian Gulf where pearls were obtained, hence the translation – “source of pearls”. Authors of epitaphs in two different shtetls would hardly both have used the same non-standard expression accidentally. Rather, they must have been following some text which is unknown to us. Thus, biblical and even Talmudic quotes turn out to be indirect.

Three stages can be singled out in the development of epitaphs:

Early epitaphs, usually consisting of just the indispensable elements. In Central and Western Europe this is the period preceding the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the epitaphs at Jewish cemeteries in Ukraine belong to the following stages.

Advanced epitaphs, characterized by the use of numerous biblical and post-biblical quotes and allusions, “baroque” panegyric and mournful formulae, and poetic devices, such as tropes and rhymes; emphasis on the personality of the deceased (sometimes also of the author); and finally, formation of regional and local styles.

Decline of the epitaph genre in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Individual elements of epitaphs are already gone in this period. Standard elements, such as the initial abbreviation פ”נ and the final ת”נצבה, become symbols and morph into the decor of the gravestone. The epitaph, meanwhile, can be written in a non-Jewish language.

At the same time, finer regional and temporal features can be noted. For example, inscriptions from South-Eastern Galicia and Western Bukovina (Pechenezhin, Kosov, Kutu, Snyatin, Banilov, Vizhnitsa) have quite a few features distinguishing them from those in Podolia or Brody.

#### *5.4. Informational value of epitaphs*

The particular historical information found in epitaphs is quite varied. Found early monuments can help to specify the time a community formed. For example, when a 1583 gravestone was found in Vishnevet, the earlier statement that Jews had only lived there since the 17<sup>th</sup> century was refuted<sup>48</sup>. When inscriptions from 1648 and later years were discovered in Buchach and Bolekhov, reports of the full annihilation of these communities during the Cossack uprising were disproved<sup>49</sup>.

Data on particular personalities is another field of research. For example, the grave of the very sparsely known 18<sup>th</sup> century memoirist Dov-

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Ber Birkenthaler (Brezhvoer) was found in Bolekhov<sup>50</sup>. Epitaphs can reflect on events. Say, three inscriptions from Satanov mention a war against the Turks and the Tatars at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, thus confirming contemporary reports of Satanov being ravaged<sup>51</sup>. A curious gravestone belongs to Malka Babad from Brody who travelled to Palestine with a group of Galician pilgrims in 1811, and then returned to Brody and was buried there in 1834. Brody was a center of the Haskala, and its cemetery contains the gravestones of such cultural figures as Jacob Werber (1890), publisher of the newspaper *Ivri Anokhi*, and Yona Byk (1816–1893) whose epitaph was written by his son-in-law, famous writer Shlomo Malkendern.

Another field of research benefiting from the generality of epitaph material: various sociological and demographical surveys. For example, a statistic based on a selection of 724 names from Satanov, Busk, and Vishnevet from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century showed the most popular Jewish male names to be Moshe (8%), Yitzkhak (7%), Avraham, Joseph, and Eliezer (4.5% each); the most common female names were Hanna (8%), Rachel, Leah, Sara, and Bella (5% each). Curiously enough, the most deaths happened in the spring month of Adar (13.7%); the least deaths took place in the summer months of Tammuz (4.7%) and Av (6.1%)<sup>52</sup>. Potentially, epitaphs can be used for various sociological polls, gender surveys, and other research.

Hebrew epitaphs are a separate genre. Like other traditional types of Jewish literature, this genre existed in a close relation with rabbinic literature, whose texts were its source of quotes, images, tropes, and rhetoric devices. The apparition of this genre about a thousand years ago was caused also by European cultural influence. Material from Ukraine shows the peak and decline of this sort of literature. The main task of these texts is to comprehend and overcome death. This is implemented by immortalizing the memory of the deceased, by linking him/her to the eternal categories of the Bundle of Life and the realities of Jewish texts, and by giving his soul repose and a favorable sentence from the heavenly court.

### 6. Carved decor

The decorated gravestones of the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries are some of the most striking examples of the East-European Jewish folk art. The first decorated columns appeared at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the major cultural centers of Eastern Europe (Prague, Krakow) and were influenced by Renaissance art<sup>53</sup>. The gravestones of that period are shaped like arches or portals; the most common type of decoration is a floral or architectural pattern.

Early 17<sup>th</sup> century monuments feature figurative motifs: lions, gryphons, images of wreaths or crowns. The following development of stone-cutting art is reflected in manifold examples from Podolia, Galicia, and Volyn. The most meticulous in the artistic sense are the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century monuments in Medzhibozh, Satanov (Podolia), and Vishnevets (Volyn). A unique self-sufficient style of stone-cutting art with many local variations and unified composition and figurative language formed in Podolia in Volyn in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The art met its degeneracy and decline in the mid – late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The gravestones are variations on a portal or gate, sometimes joined with columns and evoking associations with the Jerusalem Temple. Also popular are depictions of plants and animals. The portal motif is correlated with decorated *aron-kodesh*'s and illuminated cover pages of printed and manuscript books. The art of stone-cutting is closely related to such types of folk art as carved wooden decor, synagogue plafond murals, metal synagogue chandeliers, golden embroidered ornaments on curtains (*parokhet* and *kaporet*), ornaments on Torah scrolls, ritual items, and utensils related to the calendar and life cycle<sup>54</sup>.

Gravestone reliefs display a wide array of graphic symbols which are to a certain extent complementary to the text. There are no human figures in the reliefs because of the prohibition in the Second Commandment (“thou shalt not make thee any graven image”). Instead, animals are portrayed (so, on a monument in Medzhibozh, bears have replaced the spies, *meraglim*, and are carrying fruit from the Holy Land); a part instead of the whole: a hand raised in priestly blessing (on a Cohen gravestone) or holding a jug (on a Levy gravestone). Extremely popular are the candlestick motif (*menorah*) and the floral motif, tracing back to the Tree of Life.

Images of animals often correspond with the name of the deceased: a lion on the gravestone of Aryeh-Leyb, a stag for Tzvi-Hirsch, a wolf for Zev-Wolf, a bear for Dov-Ber, birds for Feyga-Tzippora, etc. Some symbols are semantically more complicated and sometimes ambiguous. Dr. B. Khaimovitch showed in a series of publications in recent years that some symbols are semantically universal, whereas the semantics of others are local and even individual, depending on the particular artist<sup>55</sup>. For example, a heraldic eagle is virtually always associated with the idea of royal power as a metaphor for God's rule. At the same time, the image of three hares running in a circle can be linked to the month of Adar, or to the holiday of Peysakh, or to the notion of time running, or to the three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), especially in relation to the eulogy mentioned above. Note that the figurative motifs are in

any case subordinate to the idea of temporary being in the grave and future resurrection of the dead in messianic times; they emphasize the virtues of the deceased and their connection to Jewish tradition. In this way, the image complements the text. B. Khaimovitch notices that the work of Podolian Jewish artists is related to European art, and much less dependent on Oriental art and that of the surrounding nations than it usually thought<sup>56</sup>.

### 7. Conclusion

In the recent 20 years the old Jewish cemeteries of Ukraine have become the object of intensive study. The data assembled during these years with regard to the epitaphs and carved design of the gravestones, allow to make certain conclusions and generalizations. Besides the concrete informative meaning of the inscriptions, we have found the epitaphs to contain expressions of a multitude of ideas related to the concept of death in Jewish cultural tradition. The burial customs of any culture show its view on death and ways of comprehending it. Ukrainian material displays the specific category of Jewish epitaphs, a product of traditional rabbinic literature, expressing notions of the immortal soul, resurrection of the dead, repose of the soul, and its interaction with the living.

The Jews of Podolia, Volyn, and Galicia have also created a stone-cutting art with its own stylistic and symbolism, by researching which one may understand the semantics and relations between textual and non-textual sources of meaning in the Jewish culture in general. The symbols and images of applied art complement the texts of the epitaphs and are interpreted through these texts, which are intended to overcome death by linking the individual to the world of Jewish texts, the absolute.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> We use the historical names of the regions of Western Ukraine: Podolia (today's Khmelnytsky, Vinnitsa, and parts of other oblasts), Volyn (Zhitomir, Rovno, and Volyn oblasts), Eastern Galicia (Lvov, Ternopol, and Ivano-Frankovsk oblasts), Bukovina (most of Chernovtsy oblast).

<sup>2</sup> On regional dialects of Yiddish and on local features of the Ashkenazi culture, see Herzog, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Gorodetsky (1902), see also Finn (1860).

<sup>4</sup> Baber (1895).

<sup>5</sup> Biber (1907).

<sup>6</sup> E.g., in the book Korot Podolia (History of Podolia).

<sup>7</sup> Lukin (1993).

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., Nissenbaum (1913), Vishnitsker (1914).

<sup>9</sup> Malkin and Yudovin (1920). See also Levy (1924).

<sup>10</sup> Goberman (1989, 1993, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Fahn (1929), Balaban (1929).

<sup>12</sup> Gelber (1955), Cohen (1956), Eschel (1957).

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Haberman (1982), Morgenshtern (1993).

<sup>14</sup> These are works by M. and S. Krajewski (1986, 1989), Muneles (1955, 1988), Broke (2001), Kafka (1991), Kara (1994), Wodzinski (1998), Ehl (1991), Hondo (1999) and others; see bibliography for Tagger (1997) and Wiesemann (2005).

<sup>15</sup> Khaimovitch (1994a), Dvorkin (1994), Dymshits (1994), Lukin (2000).

<sup>16</sup> Khaimovitch (1994b, 2000, 2004).

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<sup>17</sup> Nosonovsky (1994, 1998, 1998a, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> See: [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org).

<sup>19</sup> See the website of the International Survey of Jewish Monuments, [www.isjm.org](http://www.isjm.org).

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Alfassi (1977).

<sup>21</sup> Khodorkovsky (1998).

<sup>22</sup> Divny (2001).

<sup>23</sup> Note the work on the Karaite cemetery in Galitch (Ivano-Frankovsk oblast), Yurtchenko (2000).

<sup>24</sup> On Jews in the Hellenistic colonies of the Northern Black Sea Region, see Levinskaya (1992), Danshin (1993). On Jews in medieval Crimea – Chwolson (1884), Harkavy (1879), Dubnow (1909), Kizilov (2003). Note that Chwolson's work (1884) was one of the first attempts to create a system of Jewish paleography to help date epigraphic monuments, but is today considered unreliable in many regards.

<sup>25</sup> In this article we transliterate Hebrew words based on the standard Ashkenazi pronunciation (except non-Ashkenazi monuments and Israeli names and facts). In various regions of Ukraine at different periods, the accepted pronunciation could have been based both on the South-Eastern (Ukrainian), Central (Polish), and North-Eastern (Litvak) dialects of Yiddish, and on sub-dialects. See Herzog (1995); discussion on epitaphs in Nosonovsky (2008).

<sup>26</sup> Heilman (2001).

<sup>27</sup> E.g., Dvorkin (1994) reports a separate women's quarter at the cemetery in Medzhibozh.

<sup>28</sup> E.g., the legend of a curse upon whoever builds an oyhel over the grave of the founder of Chassidism, Besht, in Medzhibozh, and other legends (Dymshits, 2000:85). The image of the Jewish gravestone has been referred to by venerable men of letters, e.g., I. Manger's sonnet "Epitaph", or C.N. Byalik's poem "Beys-Oyloom" (1901).

<sup>29</sup> Ethnographer-Slavicist O.V. Belova in her several recent works examined the attitude of the Slavic population of Polesye and Podolia towards Jews, including legends to do with Jewish cemeteries. E.g., says Belova (1996), stone grit scraped off an inscription on a Jewish gravestone can be used to hex a blacksmith neighbor. There are superstitions that Jews were buried in a sitting position (perhaps because of the closely spaced gravestones); that meeting a Jewish funeral procession is a bad omen. Some informants reported that the image of hands on a matseva (the Cohen blessing sign) symbolizes Jews "voting" for Christ's crucifixion, etc.

<sup>30</sup> On the destruction of Jewish cemeteries by the Nazis, see Prager, 1973.

<sup>31</sup> According to pre-revolutionary publications (Biber, 1907), there were 15th-century gravestones in Ostrog – the oldest Ashkenazi monuments in Eastern Europe. In the 1960s the Soviet authorities had the old cemetery in Kolomiya, where famous rabbis were buried, including Rabbi Hillel of Kolomiya, demolished and laid with asphalt. When our field group was in Kolomiya in August 1990, there was a meeting taking place in the central square because of a monument to Lenin being taken down whose concreted foundation consisted of gravestones from the old Jewish cemetery.

<sup>32</sup> Such incidents have been documented in Kamenets-Podolsky, Zhvanets (Khmelnitsky oblast), Berezhany (Ternopol oblast), Yaryshev (Vinnitsa oblast), and many other places. According to some testimonies, gravestones from the old cemetery in Lvov were used as construction materials for a silo pit.

<sup>33</sup> Monument to Yehuda, son of Jacob, deceased on Kislev 3rd 5281 (November 23, 1520), see Nosonovsky, 1998. This is the oldest remaining Ashkenazi gravestone on the territory of Eastern Europe. Some sources quote 15th century monuments (Biber, 1907), but even if those existed, they have not remained. In Poland an older monument (from 1203) has only been located in Wrocław (Silesia) – a territory which has had a cultural propensity towards Germany (Krajewskaja, 1989; Wodzinski, 1998). On Jewish monuments in Krakow, see Hondo, 1999; in Hungary, see Scheiber, 1983. Note that the cemetery in Chufut-Kale (Crimea) contains non-Ashkenazi gravestones since the 14th century, and Mangup-Kale – since the 15th; there are also monuments in the Crimea from the Hellenistic period, not belonging to the matter at issue (Harkavy, 1879; Dubnow, 1914; Danshin, 1992; Levinskaya, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> For a full list of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century monuments, see: Nosonovsky (1998).

<sup>35</sup> See Dvorkin (1994), Lukin (1990).

<sup>36</sup> Gelber (1955).

<sup>37</sup> The Talmud (Shekalim, 1:1, Mo'ed Katan, 1:2) says that the soul of the deceased lives for a year on the grave and can see and hear whatever is happening there. A sign called nefesh (soul) should be placed on the grave to mark a place of ritual impurity and remembrance of the dead. The cemetery can also be visited in order for the deceased to ask for mercy for us in heaven (Ta'anit 16a). Rabban Gamliel insisted for every Jew, regardless of their social position, to be buried equally modestly. Rabbinical literature mentions more than once that “monuments ought not to be built for the righteous, because their words are their memory” (Bereishit Rabba 82:10, Yerushalmi Shekalim 2:47a, Mekhilta 11:7). The tractate Horayot 13b lists reading epitaphs among activities leading to weakening of memory and distraction from one's studies.

<sup>38</sup> Early Jewish epitaphs of the first millennium in Europe are composed in Greek or Latin with inclusions (one or several words) in Hebrew (Horst, 1991, 1994). On the verge of the second millennium, Hebrew gradually becomes the language of epitaphs. This process is parallel to the dispersion of Talmudic learning and creation of new centers of Judaism in Germany, France, Spain, and Italy. Thus, the medieval Hebrew epitaph with its characteristic features appears in Europe about a thousand years ago and is inseparably linked with rabbinic literature.

<sup>39</sup> Kovalnitsky (1898), Khomentovskaya (1995).

<sup>40</sup> Certain 20<sup>th</sup> century inscriptions form an exception, e.g., the epitaphs of famous writer of fables Eliezer Scheinberg (1932) in Chernovtsy, Yiddish writer and teacher Azriel Yanover (1938) from Khotin (Chernovtsy oblast), and several others.

<sup>41</sup> Hebrew and Yiddish were not always juxtaposed in the traditional Jewish society; rather, they existed in close symbiosis, and it is sometimes very difficult to draw a distinction between them (Weinreich, 1980). The same text can be viewed as a Yiddish text saturated with Hebrew-Aramaic vocabulary, or a Hebrew text in its Ashkenazi version with Yiddish loanwords. The author holds that in the period before modernization, a juxtaposition of literary and everyday realities is more relevant, expressed in particular in written texts through switching between phonetic and consonant orthography. Hebrew, learned from Scriptures, served to denote “literary” realities and referents, whereas Yiddish, used commonly, designated everyday realities. This explains quite a few features of orthography switches in epitaphs (Nosonovsky, 2008).

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<sup>42</sup> The identical spelling of the words Tziyon (Zion) and tziyun (sign – one of the words for gravestone) could be played up by authors of inscriptions, e.g., when using the verse from Psalms 48:12 “Walk about Zion and go around her; Count her towers.”

<sup>43</sup> The medieval historian David Ganz from Prague noted that the Jews of 16th-century Prague had a procedure of awarding one with the title of מהורר, an equivalent of the Christian doctorate (Nosonovsky, 2006).

<sup>44</sup> Foygelman (1961).

<sup>45</sup> The idea that time, space, and individuality form a system of three “coordinates” is found in Jewish texts and is probably derived from the cabbalistic *Sefer Yetzira*, where these three categories are presented as *olam* (world), *shana* (year), and *nefesh* (soul).

<sup>46</sup> The meaning of the term “elegy” is narrower in oriental literature (mourning poem), than in Russian literature (sorrowful, lyrical poem).

<sup>47</sup> Handwritten collections of standard rhymes and expressions used by epitaph compilers are reported by I. 'Immanuel (1963), concerning the Sephardic cemetery in Salonika. Such figures of the Haskala as I. Levinson (1860) from Kremenets and I. Shor (1894) from Brody wrote their own epitaphs. S. Mandelkern wrote the epitaph for his father-in-law Yona Byk's (1893) grave in Brody.

<sup>48</sup> Kirshenboim (1978).

<sup>49</sup> Cohen (1956), Eschel (1957), Brauer (1978), Gelber (1978).

<sup>50</sup> Vishnitzer (1922), Brauer (1978b).

<sup>51</sup> Hanover (1878).

<sup>52</sup> Nosonovsky (2006).

<sup>53</sup> Khaimovitch (1994).

<sup>54</sup> Goberman (2000).

<sup>55</sup> Khaimovitch (2000a, b, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Khaimovitch (2000b).

## THREE PROBLEMS WITH JEWISH CEMETERIES

*Semen Charny  
(Moscow)*

They say that the Jewish community has three pillars to stand on: prayer in synagogues, Torah studies, and burial according to Jewish customs.

However, the tumultuous events that took place on the territory of the former Russian empire in the twentieth century (mass secularization, state policy regarding “eradication of religious prejudice”, the Holocaust) led to the only pillar remaining more or less widespread being the burial. Most synagogues were destroyed or repurposed; Torah studies were practically banned.

The situation changed little after the Soviet regime was liberalized and then fell. Synagogue prayer and Torah studies are still the lot of a very limited group of mainly elderly people, while people of all ages have use for cemetery services.

As a result it is the problems that are related to cemeteries that one and all Jewish community leaders are forced to deal with, whether they have a synagogue or not.

The main problems facing Jewish communities in this sector are as follows: “overpopulation” of cemeteries, providing care for the graves, and inability to hold a funeral according to Jewish tradition. All these are inter-related, all arising from the same cause – the abrupt decrease of Jewish population in the Russian empire and then USSR in the twentieth century, due to the Holocaust and mass emigration. We will attempt to show this by discussing each of the aforementioned problems.

Easiest to understand is the link between the disappearance (or sharp decrease) of Jewish population and lack of order at cemeteries. Usually the ones leaving are the young and middle-aged, and the old people staying behind often simply do not have the energy (not to mention the means)

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to sustain the necessary order. The lack of people ready to take care of the burial places leads to graves becoming overgrown with weeds in a matter of years, and the cemetery itself turning into something like littered wasteland. This relates mainly to cities with small or non-existent Jewish communities. The image of such a graveyard in the eyes of the people around it is well represented in the following extract on the Jewish cemetery in Borisoglebsk (Voronezh oblast): “lilac and maple densely populate all the graves; the iron gate from Peshkova street is bent and hacked up as though Schwarzenegger has spent a week mauling it; most of the stone memorials have been knocked down; gravestones are cracked, the surviving ones covered in traces of the popular graffiti fad; piles of household rubbish, syringes, etc. are all over the cemetery.”<sup>1</sup> Also, both in the period of Nazi occupation and (even more so) in the post-war period, gravestones were purposefully destroyed on a massive scale by using them to pave roads, for construction purposes, etc.

Naturally, the situation is much better in larger cities with large Jewish communities, but even in Moscow, at the Vostryakovskoye cemetery, I have spotted neglected graves right by the central lane with its pompous burial places just in August 2008. Vandalism occurs often as well, as the cemetery is one of the few places where nationalists can easily identify Jews. • According to data provided by the community of Perm, 750 gravestones were demolished there in 2006, another 1,850 were defaced and disfigured, and cemetery archives were destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

As a cemetery’s desolation is usually followed by it being destroyed or “restructured”, the Jewish communities are doing all they can to prevent it. However, the only real course of action for them to take is organizing volunteer cleaning operations. These can have impressive scope. Thus, in September 2008 in Chisinau, several dozens of people representing the main Jewish organizations of the city cleaned a cemetery of approximately 27,000 graves.<sup>3</sup> In June 2007, the Jewish community of Yekaterinburg held a cleaning operation on the Jewish part of the city’s Northern cemetery; 250 people lent a hand.<sup>4</sup> Toyva Vaydislaver from Orhei, Moldova, cleaned the city’s desolate cemetery alone for six months in 2007, and cleared it fully, thus showing a unique example of volunteer work. The weekly newspaper Jewish Shtetl named T. Vaydislaver the Moldovan Jewish community’s Person of the Year.<sup>5</sup> Also notable is the work of rabbi of Samarkand, Itzhak Yakobson, who has initiated regular cleaning of the cemetery and an increase in the number of

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• More on anti-Semitic cemetery vandalism, see the report of the Expert group on problems of anti-Semitism under the World Jewish Congress (WJC) FSU Committee in this issue of the Yearbook.

keeping personnel.<sup>6</sup> Members of the Khevra Kadisha organization in Moscow, founded with the aid of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia (FJC), have been cleaning the Vostryakovskoye cemetery since 2006. According to the media, cleaning operations have been held at the cemeteries of: St. Petersburg (April 15, 2007<sup>7</sup>; May 6 and 18, 2008)<sup>8</sup>, Baranovichi (November 2006)<sup>9</sup>, Barnaul (May 18, 2008)<sup>10</sup>, Bobruisk (March-April 2005)<sup>11</sup>, Volgograd (October 17, 2004<sup>12</sup>; April 26, 2007<sup>13</sup>; October 20, 2007<sup>14</sup>, April 4, 2008)<sup>15</sup>, Irkutsk (August 2004, October 2004)<sup>16</sup>, Kaliningrad (May 2006; June 6, 2006)<sup>17</sup>, Chisinau (August 19, 2007; April 13, 2008)<sup>18</sup>, Minsk (May 2007)<sup>19</sup>, Perm (May 2006)<sup>20</sup>, Rybinsk (May 8, 2008)<sup>21</sup>, Rybnitza, Semipalatinsk (June 2008)<sup>22</sup>, Tambov (July 11, 2004)<sup>23</sup>, Kherson (June 15, 2008)<sup>24</sup>. In Rybnitza, the work of saving the cemetery has even become the main idea uniting the community<sup>25</sup>. Hillel and Sochnut together with the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies have been holding regular youth expeditions in Belarus since 2006, wherein Jewish youth put in order the old Jewish cemeteries of various towns. Earlier, such work has also been done at times by students at field schools in Jewish studies organized by the Sefer Center (e.g., in May 2004 students helped to clean the Jewish cemetery in Samarkand).

In most cases, regular cleanings have begun since 2004–2006, that is, after the communal leaders had managed to get somewhat closer to solving the main social problems of the elderly Jews forming the backbone of every Jewish community in the FSU. As not all such reports make it to print media or websites, one could claim that such operations take place in many other cities as well.

However, the most significant expense concerning cemeteries has to do not with cleaning, but rather with renovating and maintaining in a good state memorials and service premises. An idea of this price can be gathered from the amount intended for the renovation of the Preobrazhenskoye cemetery in St. Petersburg – \$5 million.<sup>26</sup> This is where philanthropist businessmen take the lead. In July 2008, Roman Abramovich, a famous entrepreneur and one of the main sponsors of the FJC, granted funding to the FJC-initiated renovation of the House of Ablution at the Jewish (Preobrazhenskoye) cemetery in St. Petersburg and beautification of the cemetery itself.<sup>27</sup> There has been in recent years a certain stirring in the activities of charitable foundations, usually established by representatives of the respective Jewish diasporas (expatriates' communities). Most famous for its activities is the Dor le-Dor (Generation to Generation) Foundation in Chisinau: it is working on the development of the Chisinau Jewish cemetery. A full map of the cemetery has been made, it

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is being catalogued, the fences and lanes are being renovated, etc.<sup>28</sup> In the years 2003–2006, the Foundation spent \$200,000 on the beautification of the cemeteries. 17,000 out of the cemetery's 24,000 graves have been identified and entered into the book, *Necropolis*. Although Dor le-Dor claims to be a charitable foundation, its website sports an advertisement for an enterprise with a whole set of services including face-lifts for gravestones, lighting memorial candles on birthdays and anniversaries of death, and saying the memorial prayer – all for \$60.<sup>29</sup>

Another notable organization is the Tajikistan Foundation, established in 1995. In 2007–2008 only it funded renovation of 180 graves, each costing \$40–\$50. As of July 2008, 80–90 more graves were intended for renovation. Moreover, the Foundation spends \$6,000–\$7,000 annually to maintain order at the Jewish cemetery in Dushanbe.<sup>30</sup>

In Tashkent, a foundation of the same name, founded by Bukharian Jews, holds bi-annual (May 9<sup>th</sup> and Av 9<sup>th</sup>) cleaning operations at the Chagatay Bukharian Jewish cemetery. At the same time, local businessmen sponsored renovation of the fence at the same cemetery in 2003.<sup>31</sup>

Occasionally, cemeteries are renovated and even maintained at the expense of individual expatriates (such was the case of the cemetery in Narodichi urban settlement in the Zhitomir oblast and Brichany settlement in Moldova).<sup>32</sup>

However, currently the activities of charitable foundations and individual philanthropists are markedly local, and it is difficult to expect any change for the better in medium-term prospects. Rather the opposite – with regard to the recession and following “optimization of expenses” cemetery financing may be severely cut.

At the same time there is obviously no hope of state funding – most FSU states simply have no resources for such “luxuries” as tending graves (it is enough to remember that there are often not enough funds to maintain even the graves of soldiers who died in WWII), with the only exception of ancient Jewish cemeteries in what used to be the Pale of Settlement, which can be used as tourist sites. However, chances of such use are currently very low, as the infrastructure is unready to receive tourists interested in “Jewish flavor” and there would be a need for significant prior investment. This makes understandable the unwillingness of the authorities of Semipalatinsk in June 2008 to react to the Jewish community center's idea of declaring the Jewish cemetery a historic monument.<sup>33</sup>

Occasionally municipalities will, however, meet the communities halfway, although this is quite rare (mainly, as mentioned before, for lack

of municipal resources). Thus, in 2008 the municipal authorities of Borisov, Belarus, lent the Jewish community equipment to remove from the cemetery some old trees which were about to fall.<sup>34</sup> Chairman of the Bobruisk city executive council Dmitry Monakhov claimed at his meeting with community representatives in early November, 2007, that the municipality will take all necessary measures to prevent vandalism at the city's cemeteries: they would erect fences around them and provide security guards.<sup>35</sup> The municipality of Mogilyov also promised to help the local community to clean up the cemetery in September 2006, with a committee on putting the Jewish cemetery in order established under the city executive council.<sup>36</sup> As part of the 2008–2011 agenda of organizational events and resource base development in the ritual services field, the municipality of St. Petersburg has granted funding for reconstructions of lanes at the Jewish (Preobrazhenskoye) cemetery.<sup>37</sup> Curiously enough, in this case the city governor V. Matviyenko suggested almost openly that the community take part in the financing of the renovation, saying during her visit to the Rosh ha-Shana reception 5767: "This is our memory, our traditions, our ancestors. Let us join forces and make it so the cemetery will not be an embarrassment!"<sup>38</sup>

On October 25, 2007, Shneur Segal, the rabbi of Krasnodar, Yuri Teytelbaum, the head of the Jewish community, and the city head Vladimir Yevlanov, signed an agreement to restore and preserve the Jewish cemetery.<sup>39</sup>

Omsk oblast Interior Affairs Management head Viktor Kamertzel ordered a twenty-four hour security post to be stationed at the Jewish cemetery in Omsk in January 2008.<sup>40</sup>

The Samarkand municipality granted funding to repair the crumbling wall of the Jewish cemetery as part of large-scale works of renovating the city in honor of its 2750<sup>th</sup> anniversary in August 2007.<sup>41</sup>

The activity of the municipality of Comrat, capital of Gagauzia (an autonomous region in Moldova) is unique considering the general poverty of Gagauzia itself. In the late 2005, following a number of requests on the part of the Jewish community and with the aid of the Moldovan government, a new fence was erected surrounding the cemetery, garbage was removed, etc. A special service to attend to the cemeteries of the city was established.<sup>42</sup>

In some cases, the Jewish cemetery becomes an obstacle to large-scale municipal construction or major business. The most famous such story has been developing in Baku since 2007. First, the graves of the Narimanovskoye cemetery were exhumed in September–November 2007, as the municipality had decided to build a highway there. Some of the gravestones were moved to

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the newly-founded cemetery on the outskirts of Baku, in Govsany. Although at first the government promised that the reburial would be financed in full, but then they paid \$25 for each exhumation, leaving another \$250 to be paid for a non-waterlogged spot at the new cemetery.<sup>43</sup> The deceased who had no active relatives, were not reburied, their graves were destroyed. This led to a scandal resounding far beyond Azerbaijan. As a result, the mayor's office of Baku was forced to issue a special declaration, claiming that the Narimanovskoye cemetery is being relocated in accordance with religious customs, that the society was not informed correctly and in time of the particular work performed, and that there was not enough transparency provided throughout the process.<sup>44</sup> In 2008, rumors appeared that the same treatment was intended for the graves of the Jewish cemetery in Baku. This has similarly commercial roots, as the price of land in the neighborhood where the cemetery is located is \$5000 per meter square.<sup>45</sup>

In Sovetsk (Kaliningrad oblast of the Russian Federation) in 2007, a local businessman attempted to construct a dwelling house on the site of the Jewish cemetery. It was only after the oblast governor G. Boos interfered and prohibited construction that the situation was safely solved.<sup>46</sup> An identical situation with a dwelling house and a shopping mall built on a cemetery site in Yekaterinburg in April 2007 led to the destruction of 350 graves. The construction was only stopped after regional authorities interfered.<sup>47</sup>

The municipal architectural administration of Krasnodar granted the security enterprise Stek permission to build a sports and recreation complex on part of the cemetery in 2003. Although consequently the community put great efforts into beautifying the cemetery and even received praise from the municipality in late 2004, representatives of Stek still claimed ownership of the cemetery area in 2005, presenting their claims directly at a regular Sunday cleaning event.<sup>48</sup> Later the enterprise sued the Jewish community of Krasnodar, demanding 20,000 rubles in moral damages. These demands were rejected in July 2006, and on August 2nd the Krasnodar municipality revoked its earlier edict which had permitted construction of a commercial building on the site of the Jewish cemetery.<sup>49</sup>

In 1979–2001 and 2002–2006 secondary burial was carried out at the Jewish cemetery in Mogilyov, causing the destruction of several thousand graves.<sup>50</sup> It took numerous appeals to legal authorities by community representatives for the burial to stop. And then, when in September 2006 a committee on bringing the Jewish cemetery to order was established under the Mogilyov city council, the alleged municipal support seemed to

be simply covering the disbursement of the budget allocated to it. At least, a year afterwards the community members themselves said that the only work seen at the cemetery was when gravestones got damaged during tree-cutting.<sup>51</sup>

In some places the cemeteries are viewed as profitable enterprises and become prey to raider attacks. Thus, in Chisinau in the late 2006, the state Center of Ritual Services attempted to gain access to the Dor le-Dor Foundation's cemetery beautification fund. Having been refused, the officials went on to oust the Foundation from the cemetery in December 2006.<sup>52</sup> The new administration introduced a fee for access to the grave catalogue (prepared by the Dor le-Dor Foundation) and paid entry passes for volunteers who came to clean neglected graves.<sup>53</sup> Then fence sales caused scandal, etc. Finally a criminal case for fraud and theft was initiated against the cemetery manager appointed by the Center of Ritual Services.<sup>54</sup> A similar situation occurred several years ago in Malakhovka by Moscow, only in that case the attempt to usurp control over the cemetery was made by local criminals.

The chance of help from "roof" organizations is small (especially in view of the recession), as they consider the local communities responsible for cemetery repairs.<sup>55</sup>

Therefore, all that is left to hope for is the pro-active position of the Jewish communities. So, the Jewish community of Omsk has recently initiated erection of a new fence around the Novoyevreyskoye (New-Jewish) cemetery<sup>56</sup>; in Pinsk, a workers' brigade was created in 2005, prepared to repair and renovate derelict memorials for a moderate fee<sup>57</sup>, and compilation of a martyrology of the buried at the Pinsk Jewish cemetery has begun<sup>58</sup>; the Borisov Jewish community has begun documenting their cemetery<sup>59</sup>; a guide to the Jewish cemetery in Bobruisk was published in June 2008<sup>60</sup>; a stone fence was built around the cemetery and 2 tons of cement prepared for grave renovation in 2006 by the community of the unrecognized Transnistrian Moldovan Republic (PMR) Rybnitza<sup>61</sup>.

Meanwhile, in places where communities are weak or non-existent, Jewish cemeteries are most likely doomed to become extinct. For example, in 2007, the Bukharian Jewish community in Baku failed to collect the \$15,000 necessary to clean the cemetery<sup>62</sup>; in February 2008, a fully derelict cemetery was accidentally found in Moldova, where the last burial was dated to 1987<sup>63</sup>. Since, unfortunately, such "weak" communities are in the majority, and there is little hope for a sudden increase in state support, it is probable that the number of neglected (or "repurposed") cemeteries will continue to grow.

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“Overpopulation” of Jewish cemeteries led to paths being used as burial space. This is what the Jewish cemetery in Baku looks like: “The central lane of the cemetery, several years ago wide enough for automotive vehicles, has now narrowed because of new burials to a little path whose width is barely sufficient for a hand barrow. For the most part, there are not even such paths anymore: narrow difficult tracks lead to the graves of relatives and close ones.”<sup>64</sup> However paradoxical this may sound, the situation arises from the sudden decrease in Jewish population. It was probably assumed that a disappearing ethnos will make do with existing graveyards. However, after the “Jewish renaissance” began in the 1990s, the Jewish population turned out to be larger than expected, and the problem of cemetery overpopulation became more than topical. As a result, a spot on the same Vostryakovskoye cemetery in Moscow will at times cost up to \$10,000.<sup>65</sup>

The only possible solution to this problem is for new spots to be allocated on existing cemeteries or new lots to be given to the Jews for Jewish cemeteries. In September 2005, it was agreed that the municipality of Dzerzhinsk (Nizhniy Novgorod oblast) would allocate a separate section of the cemetery for Jewish graves.<sup>66</sup> Spring 2006 saw a new lot allocated in Kostroma.<sup>67</sup> In June 2006 the Jewish community of Kremenchug received one for their cemetery.<sup>68</sup> A new cemetery was opened in Sevastopol in January 2007.<sup>69</sup>

The mayor of Samara, V. Tarkhov, promised to allocate new land for a Jewish cemetery in February 2008.<sup>70</sup> President of the Republic of Udmurtia, Alexander Volkov, promised to support the request of the Jewish community of Udmurtia’s capital Izhevsk to grant a lot for a Jewish cemetery, when he met with the leaders of the community in April 2008.<sup>71</sup>

There are examples of the opposite as well. Thus, the Jewish community of Bryansk has been struggling to no avail for a cemetery lot for several years.<sup>72</sup>

However, the fact that a lot gets allocated does not necessarily mean that there will appear a Jewish cemetery on it in the close future. For example, let us discuss the situation with the new Jewish cemetery in Moscow. The Moscow municipality passed a resolution in February 1997, “On granting the Jewish community of Moscow the use of the estate at Borovskoye highway, 634 (Western administrative region) for the purpose of building a cemetery and a ceremonial complex”. The resolution determined that a lot of 6 hectares was to be given to the community for the purpose of building a cemetery in 1997–1998. It specified that should the lot remain unused for two years, the Moscow Land Committee would suggest further use for it.<sup>73</sup> The community could not use this chance (perhaps due partly to the default in 1998), but the

authorities finally decided not to take the estate away (or maybe there were simply no other claimants).

On December 31, 2002, the municipality of Moscow passed another resolution on constructing a Jewish cemetery, naming the end term of the construction December 31, 2005. The original plan was that in 2003 the construction documents would be prepared; bidding to choose a building organization would take place, etc. In 2005 the final term was moved again, this time to December 31, 2009.<sup>74</sup> However, as of early 2008 there had been virtually no work done. To a large extent this delay is due to the complicated relations between the two participating Jewish organizations: the FJC (which lobbied the resolution) and the Jewish religious community of Moscow, part of the KEROOR (which managed to join the project in February 2003). One of the main points of argument was the FJC's suggestion to build the cemetery at their own expense without waiting for government funding. As the KEROOR even then had financing problems, accepting this suggestion would for them basically mean that the FJC would receive full control over the cemetery, which the KEROOR obviously could not agree to, so they preferred to wait for the state to grant funds. They claim that the necessary amount is already built into Moscow's 2009 budget.<sup>75</sup>

Future allocation of new lots for cemeteries will be conditioned both by the lobby resources of the Jewish community, and the deciding officials' estimate of its quantity. As the size of FSU communities remains small and will probably continue to decrease, probably it will be increasingly difficult to find new estates. It is more probable that Jews will need to be buried in general cemeteries with no regard for the ritual anymore.

Even though Jewish traditional burial is often the only way to reunite people who became assimilated in the Soviet times when learning anything about Judaism and the Jewish people was extremely difficult, it is very rarely done.

There can be several answers to the question why. The first and seemingly most natural one is that over the 70 years of assimilation the Jews have forgotten the Jewish burial customs. However, even if that is true (even though according to reports by Judaism supervisors of the Religious Cults Committee, replaced in 1966 by the Religion Committee, virtually all surviving communities practiced the burial rite throughout the period) there have been many efforts in the past 20 years to remind the former Soviet Jews of this and other customs through agitation, educational literature, etc.

Another possible answer is the lack of necessary equipment and money to buy it. Indeed, many Jews are not very well off financially, leading them and

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their relatives to accept state-provided burial services, which imply cremation as it is the cheapest option. However, the Jewish communities have repeatedly offered to bear burial expenses (so, according to FJC president A. Boroda, the FJC offers free transport, a discount off the price of a location, etc., all to “outbid” the cremation option<sup>76</sup>).

As for the necessary infrastructure, a cooperation agreement was signed on August 4, 2007, between the FJC and the Military-Memorial Company (VMK). It was suggested that cooperation with a company with approximately 300 branches in 76 regions of Russia would allow for the obligatory minimum of halakhic burial procedures in cities and regions lacking rabbis.<sup>77</sup> Despite all this, only 380 people were buried according to Jewish customs in Moscow and its oblast in 2007,<sup>78</sup> and as for the almost year-old agreement with the VMK, 58 people have used its services so far.<sup>79</sup>

Another possibility is that of legal problems. It is no secret that the legal regulations in the FSU stipulate, among other things, compulsory autopsy. Overcoming these obstacles takes time, significant amounts of it in fact. Even in Moscow until recently the relatives would have to wait for two weeks for permission to refrain from performing the autopsy (possibly they still do).<sup>80</sup> Naturally, many refused to wait that long. There will probably be no change in this issue as the authorities will not compromise in this for sanitary, epidemiologic, and forensic reasons.

However, this is far from the whole truth. People can be taught and the tradition rekindled, funds for burial can be found, changes in regulations can be lobbied. But all this can only be done with mass demand for the service. The lack of demand has also been caused by mass emigration to Israel, the USA, and Germany. Many of those who strived to preserve their Jewish lifestyles have emigrated. As for the remaining ones, most of them (according to some estimates – up to 90%) are “social Jews”, attracted to the Jewish organizations by benefits or bonuses of some kind. These people have a rather small “Jewish component” which is usually limited to love for Jewish “stars” of the Soviet period, memories of real or imaginary cases of anti-Semitism, worry for the fate of Israel, etc. Most of them are unwilling to pay for burial, or to lead exhausting battles with state officials on the issue of refusing autopsy and waiting less for the permission.

The situation could only change if the community was radically restructured, replacing today’s paternalistic model with a union of pro-active people who feel Jewish. A usual change of generation will not help, as today’s consumers will be replaced by new ones.

## Endnotes

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with FJC President Alexander Boroda (March 2008)

<sup>56</sup> Сообщение Агентства еврейских новостей от 7.09.2008 ([http://www.aen.ru/?page=brief&article\\_id=50612&PHPSESSID=4triokubiedqdvotsmvemaiuh6](http://www.aen.ru/?page=brief&article_id=50612&PHPSESSID=4triokubiedqdvotsmvemaiuh6))

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<sup>70</sup> <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=news&div=22703>

<sup>71</sup> Сообщение Агентства еврейских новостей от 13.04.2008 ([http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=article&article\\_id=716&category=politics](http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=article&article_id=716&category=politics))

<sup>72</sup> «Надеемся на лучшее отношение властей» // Агентство еврейских новостей, 31.05.2007 ([http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=brief&article\\_id=44010](http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=brief&article_id=44010))

<sup>73</sup> Постановление Правительства Москвы № 56 от 4 февраля 1997 г. «О предоставлении в пользование земельного участка по Боровскому шоссе, Пр. пр. 634 (Западный административный округ) Московской еврейской религиозной общине под строительство кладбища с ритуальным комплексом» (<http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=MLAW;n=6331;fld=134;dst=4294967295;div=LAW>)

<sup>74</sup> Постановление Правительства Москвы от 31 декабря 2002 г. N 1088-ПП «О строительстве вероисповедального (иудейского) кладбища с ритуальным комплексом по Боровскому шоссе, Проектируемый проезд 634» (<http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=MLAW;n=42986;from=81765-26;div=LAW>)

<sup>75</sup> Interview with FJC president Alexander Boroda (March 2008), Interview with KERO-OR executive vice-president Leopold Kaymovski (April 2008)

<sup>76</sup> Interview with FJC president Alexander Boroda (March 2008)

<sup>77</sup> *Чарный С.* Хоронить по еврейскому обычаю // Агентство еврейских новостей, 05.08.2007 ([http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=article&article\\_id=1183&category=tradition](http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=article&article_id=1183&category=tradition))

<sup>78</sup> Interview with rabbi Shmuel Kuperman, co-chairman of the Moscow Hevra Kadisha service (March 2008)

<sup>79</sup> Interview with representatives of the Military-Memorial Company (June 2008)

<sup>80</sup> Чарный С. Собрание еврейского похоронного общества // Агентство еврейских новостей, 16.03.2008 ([http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=article&article\\_id=1276&category=tradition](http://www.aen.ru/index.php?page=article&article_id=1276&category=tradition))

## THE OBITUARY

Rashid Muradovitch  
KAPLANOV  
(1949–2007)

Rashid Muradovitch Kaplanov, PhD, an outstanding Russian historian who has made a significant input into the revival of Jewish Studies in the FSU, was born in Moscow on January 18, 1949. Before WWI his grandfather, the Kumyk prince Rashid-khan Kaplanov, studied in Paris, where he married a Jewish girl, and then went on to become one of the leaders in the fight against the Bolsheviks in Northern Caucasus; he was shot in the late 1930s. Rashid's father, Murad Kaplanov, experienced all the trials and tribulations of a "national enemy's" son, and then became a well-known designer of space communication facilities.

While still at school, Rashid had learned the basic European languages and then dozens more. He graduated from the History Department of Moscow State University in 1971, entering doctoral studies at the General History Department of the Russian Academy of Sciences, where he later worked for many years. That was also where he defended his doctoral thesis, which became the basis of his 1992 monograph 'Portugal after WWII. 1945–1974'.

In the early 1980s Rashid Kaplanov found interest in Jewish Studies. His academic interests were extraordinarily varied: from the fates of Portuguese converts in 18th century Russia to the history of Eastern European Karaites.

Rashid Kaplanov took part in the work of the semi-legal Jewish Historical-Ethnographic Committee, then the Jewish Historical Society in Moscow, and after the fall of the Soviet government he became one of the initiators of the revival of Jewish Studies and education in Russia. He became chairman of the Academic Board of the Sefer Center in 1994, headed the editorial board of the Journal of the Jewish University in Moscow in 1995, was elected member of the European Academy (London) that same year, and became member of the Council of the World Union of Jewish Studies in 1997. R.M. Kaplanov presided over the European Jewish Studies Association in

2002–2006, and was on the General Council of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress in 2005–2007.

A brilliant lecturer, Rashid Muradovitch Kaplanov taught Jewish history for fifteen years at the Jewish University in Moscow (later known as the Dubnow Advanced School for Humanities), at the Jewish Studies Department of the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University, and at the Maimonides State Classical Academy; he gave lectures on various periods of Jewish history in universities in Russia, Great Britain, Hungary, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Ukraine, and the USA. He encouraged dozens of students and young scholars to pursue research, and guided many graduate and post-graduate students. Unfortunately, when the first PhD dissertation under his supervision was defended, he was already in hospital...

R.M. Kaplanov's educational work was not limited to universities: for ten years he taught at summer and winter schools for Jewish studies in various cities of the CIS and the Baltic states. It was in one of these cities – Chernovtsy – that he suffered a heart attack which proved to be fatal.

Rashid Kaplanov's fellows, friends, and students will gratefully cherish his memory.

John  
KLIER  
(1944–2007)

Professor John Doyle Klier, the outstanding Anglo-American researcher of the history of Russian and East-European Jews, was born in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, on December 13, 1944. After graduating from the Notre Dame University in Indiana, he took his BA and MA degrees in history there, and then entered doctoral studies at the University of Illinois.

Mr. Klier's doctoral thesis covered the integration of Jews into the Russian society in the 19th century. The book "Russia Gathers Her Jews" was later published on its basis (in Russian as well), becoming one of the fundamental works on the history of Jews in the Russian empire. John Klier has authored numerous works on Jewish history, including the monograph *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855-1881* and *Southern Storms: Russians, Jews and the Crisis of 1881–2* (the manuscript of which was finished directly before his untimely demise), as well as a co-authored popular book on the mystery of Princess Anastasia.

Mr. Klier first came to the Soviet Union in the 1970s, and was granted access to certain archival materials, as he was officially researching Russian press. After 1991 he was one of the first foreign scholars to attempt large-scale research of the Jewish archives of the FSU, working productively in archives in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Kiev, and Minsk, and introducing into academic circulation numerous previously unknown materials on the history of the Russian Jewry.

His career as an educator began in the Fort Hays State University, Kansas. He was invited to Great Britain in 1990 and worked till his dying day at University College London, where he was made professor in 1996 and spent many years as head of the UCL Jewish Studies Department.

Since the early 1990s John Klier took an active part in restoring Jewish Studies in the FSU: he was on the International Board of the Sefer Center and

on the Academic Board of the International Center for Russian and Eastern European Jewish Studies, he was on the editorial council of the *Journal of the Jewish University in Moscow* and on the editorial board of the *Jewish History Archive*, presented papers at countless Jewish Studies conferences in the FSU, gave lectures at universities, summer schools, and seminars.

John was the only Western professor to bring his students to student conferences on Jewish Studies in Moscow. He organized international student conferences in London in 2000 and 2004, wherein many students and young scholars from the FSU were able to participate. In 2004 he was an expert for summer schools in Jewish Studies organized in Samarkand, Podolia and Bukovina, Moscow, Taman, and Crimea with the EAJC's aid.

Fond memories of John Klier, a wonderful scholar and an incredibly sincere and kind person, will be forever stored in the hearts of those who were lucky enough to have known him.

<p>Maria Efimovna KOTLYAROVA (1918–2008)</p>
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Maria Efimovna Kotlyarova was the last actress of the legendary Jewish GOSET Theatre.

M.E. Kotlyarova was born in the shtetl of Ekaterinopol in the Kiev province. Her father died when she was eighteen months old, leaving her mother to raise six children on her own. In 1932, the family moved to Moscow, fleeing the hunger in Ukraine.

She displayed a talent for acting at a very young age. Graduating at 16, she took her papers directly to the Jewish Theatrical School selection committee in Stoleshnikov lane, and brilliantly passed when examined by none other than Solomon Mikhoels.

When she graduated in 1938, Manya and two of her classmates were accepted to the GOSET Company, where she acted many wonderful parts in the following ten years. Her loyalty to Jewish theatre, Mikhoels, the stage, and her Teacher's principle "never to give in" got her through the difficult evacuation years, the return to Moscow in 1943, the painful news of the fate of the Ekaterinopol Jews.

The first long-anticipated post-war play, Freylekhs, proved to be Mikhoels' last masterpiece. The murder of the Master in 1948 became the beginning of the end of Jewish theatre in the Soviet Union. Having miraculously survived the bloody massacre, Maria Efimovna was deprived for many years of the possibility to act on stage in Yiddish.

It was only in 1961 when a troupe of former GOSET actors resumed rehearsals. An "official" Jewish drama ensemble was created under the Mosconcert with the support of Aron Vergelis. This small theatrical company performed successfully with many tours, creating such wonderful plays as The Enchanted Tailor, The Spaniards, Tevey the Dairyman, The Witch, The Ladies' Tailor, and others. Maria Efimovna worked in this company until 1983.

In 1977 M.E. Kotlyarova was invited to work as a teacher-director in the newly created Chamber Jewish Theatre. She directed dances and musical numbers, and worked with beginner actors on their Yiddish.

M.E. Kotlyarova's educational activities were quite varied. She taught Yiddish since 1992 at Touro College, Maimonides State Classical Academy, and numerous seminars; in recent years she also led a theatre studio in Yiddish at the Jewish youth organization Hillel. Maria Efimovna was a superb educator who generously shared the riches of her memory and soul.

Many actors and directors approached Maria Efimovna for help and advice. She directed Jewish dances in various theatres; she dubbed Yiddish episodes in feature films ("The Commissioner", "The Sunset", "Me Ivan You Abraham"); she consulted plays (including the Lenkom's famous "Requiem"); she also worked much with the Kiev Jewish theatre Mazl Tov.

Her life is our history: the history of the Yiddish language and the Jewish culture in the Soviet Union. Bright success and hopes early on, her Teacher murdered at the peak, years of oblivion, timid attempts at revival, return. A history of a confrontation between an individual and a state. This is what her book, "Mikhoels' Shoulder", published in Moscow in 2003, is about.

The book promptly became a bibliographic rarity. One can endlessly keep rereading it, admiring the photos, crying, and marveling at the fortitude of a generation deprived of its first language, its close ones destroyed, its memory uprooted.

Maria Efimovna Kotlyarova was convinced that Jewish culture was defective without Yiddish and culture in Yiddish.

Her enthusiasm and energy ignited the hearts of many young people, teaching them "never to give in" and to carry the Yiddish culture onwards for the upcoming generations.

Here is Maria Efimovna's last poem, written in the spring of 2008:

#### א ווי געשריי

עס קלעמט מיך דער ווייטיק שוין צענדליקער יארן  
עס לאזט ניט צו רו דער פארדראס  
עס בויערט מיין מוח, כיבין מיד שוין געווארן  
צו טראגן די טענה – פאר וואס

פאר וואס איז מיין יידיש א שטיפ-קינד געווארן  
 פארזינדיקט ניט ערלעך געדינט  
 מיין פאלק האט די טייערסטע פערל פארלארן  
 ביז איצט זייער וויי געשריי קלינגט

צי איז פאר א פאלק דען דריי שפראכן א בושא  
 יידיש עברית און לאדין  
 ווער זאגט זיך דאך אפ פון א רייכער ירושה  
 עס האט דען א שכל, א זין

יידיש און עברית אין וואס איז די סיבה  
 איך שטעל אלץ די פראגע אויפסניי  
 צי קאנען צוויי שפראכן ווי שוועסטער מיט ליבע  
 ניט לעבן אין שלום געטריי

### A vey geshrey

*Es klemt mich der veytik shoyrn tsendliker yorn,  
 Es lozt nit tsu ru der fardros.  
 Es boeyrt mayn moyekh, 'kh bin mid shoyrn gevorn  
 Tsu trogn di tayne – far vos?*

*Far vos iz mayn yidish a shtif kind gevorn?  
 Farzindikt, nit erlekh gedint?  
 Mayn folk khot di tayerste perl farlorn,  
 Biz itst zeyer vey geshrey klingt.*

*Tsi iz far a folk den dray shprakhn a bushe –  
 Yidish, ivrit un ladin?  
 Ver zogt zikh dokh op fun a raykher eyrushe?  
 Es khot den a seykhhl, a zin?*

*Yidish un ivrit, in vos iz di sibe?  
 Ikh shtel alts di frage afsnay:  
 Tsi konen tsvey shprakhn vi shvester mit libe  
 Nit lebn in sholem getray?*

## A Cry of Pain

*Pain has been torturing me for years,  
sadness will not leave me.  
It is nagging at my brain, I am tired  
of guessing: why?*

*Why has my Yiddish become a stepchild?  
Did it sin, or serve wrongly?  
My people has lost its most precious pearl,  
the cry of pain is still ringing.*

*Is it a shame for a people to have three languages –  
Yiddish, Hebrew, and Ladino?  
Whoever refuses a rich legacy?  
Is there any sense in that?*

*Yiddish, Hebrew, what is the reason?  
I'm asking again:  
Could not two languages, like loving sisters,  
Live in peace?*

Vladimir Alexandrovitch  
MALKIN  
(1975–2007)

Vladimir Malkin, an employee of the EAJC's public relations department, has died suddenly on November 27, 2007. Vladimir was a striking combination of professionalism and responsibility, creative freedom and service to the Jewish tradition.

He had an early start and his interests were truly versatile. He participated in Zionist youth organizations, and at the same time was an activist in the Russian social democratic movement and one of the founders of the news agency, The Left-wing Information Center; he even ran for the State Duma as a Social Democrat in 1999.

Vladimir Malkin had worked in the EAJC's public relations department since its establishment in 2002, playing an important part in the Congress' informational campaigns.

His friends and fellows will miss Vladimir Malkin, outstanding, sensitive, and knowledgeable in various problems of the modern world, a faithful friend and a decent, sincere person. He was only starting out, he had many plans. Let him rest in peace.

Nina Samuilovna  
STEPANSKAYA (LINKOVSKAYA)  
(1954–2007)

Dr. Nina Samuilovna Stepanskaya (Linkovskaya), was a prominent Belarusian musicologist and researcher in Jewish music and an outstanding innovative pedagogue. After her early demise, she left a copious and multifarious scientific legacy.

Nina Stepanskaya graduated from the musicology department of the Belarusian State Conservatoire and did her postgraduate studies at the Moscow State Conservatoire where she worked on and defended in 1985 her dissertation on “Melody in the context of instrumental polyphony”. For two decades, she taught at the Belarusian State Conservatoire (today the Belarusian State Academy of Music, BSAM) and the BSAM Gymnasium-College having educated many generations of students. Her most important accomplishments lie in the creation of an academic course of Jewish music and in attracting young talented musicologists to the study and preservation of the invaluable stratum of Jewish culture. Nina Stepanskaya had introduced several courses in the Jewish musical tradition.

N.S. Stepanskaya’s research interests were focused on a whole range of themes: from the theory of music to philosophy, and from the music of the 20th-century composers to the Jewish folklore. Original studies on classification of Jewish music, cantorial synagogical art and Yiddish folk songs belong to her.

Nina Stepanskaya is the author of numerous research studies in which particular emphasis was placed on the issues of weltanschauung, ethnopsychology, and the esthetics of the East European Jews. The central theme of her scientific research was the study of regional peculiarities of the musical tradition of the Litvak Jews; she also dedicated a number of articles to liturgical music.

The precious material collected by Ms. Stepanskaya and her students during the expeditions she organized beginning in 1997, comprises one of

the largest and most significant collections of the Jewish folklore during the last 50 years. The collection gives us an opportunity to trace the main cultural tendencies of the Jewish musical culture in the 20th-century Belarus.

In recent years Nina Samuilovna Stepanskaya delivered several outstanding lecture courses at international training seminars and summer schools, including those organized under the auspices of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress. At her lectures, she unfolded before her audience an uninterrupted perspective of the Jewish musical culture vividly demonstrating the indivisible source of the diverse strata of that culture and its interacting and complementing genres.

Her colleagues and students enjoyed an unfailing love and respect for Nina Samuilovna Stepanskaya. She had always been kind to those around her, tactful and understanding, showing respect to the opinions of other people. Everybody she worked with and all her pupils will always remember her with gratitude.

Vladimir Ellisovitch  
TSEITLIN  
(1923–2008)

Vladimir Ellisovitch Tseitlin, chairman of the Union of Jewish War Veterans (UJWV), has died at 85 years of age on March 25, 2008.

As a war officer, colonel V.E. Tseitlin belonged to the generation which played a decisive part in the defeat of the Nazis. Before the war, at 16, Vladimir enrolled in an artillery special school, then college, and he began his way through the war as a lieutenant in command of a firing platoon. He accepted his first battle in January 1943 under Demyansk; in April 1945 he commanded a battery during the taking of Bratislava.

Returning to the ranks after a severe wound, Vladimir Tseitlin was decorated with the orders of the Red Star (for repelling a German attack in August 1944, when his guns destroyed four tanks), and the Patriotic War First Class (for forced crossing of the Gron river in Slovakia under enemy fire in February 1945).

After the war he served for many more years in the Soviet Army. Once retired, he worked in the war industry, conducted research, and created new models of defense technology. This intensive labor cost V.E. Tseitlin his vision in one eye.

An active man, Vladimir Ellisovitch was always interested in politics, sincerely wishing for Russia to become a free democratic state. Like many of his fellow veterans, he was appalled and angry at the sight of ethnic hatred, animosity, anti-Semitism, and discrimination, which there ought not to be room for in the country that has crushed Nazism. No more could colonel Tseitlin expect that in the new, democratic, post-1991 Russia, Nazi organizations would function openly, anti-Semitic newspapers would be published, Nazi propaganda fakes would be reissued, and law authorities would often look the other way.

In 1992, V.E. Tseitlin joined the UJWV, presided over until 2005 by Moisey Froimovitch Maryanovski, Hero of the Soviet Union. Eventually Tseitlin became his deputy, and after Maryanovski's death he went on to become chairman of the UJWV. He was a modest person who spoke little, but did much, and his input into publishing the "Memorial Book for the Jewish Warriors Who Fell in the Wars against Nazism" was immeasurable.

Death caught colonel Tseitlin in the heat of his work on the tenth volume of this unique publication, containing information on over 120,000 Jews who died on the battlefronts of the Great Patriotic War – about half of the Soviet troopers to have given their lives for Russia's freedom.

Blessed memories of colonel Tseitlin will always remain in the hearts of those who knew him.

Zakhar  
ROKHLIN  
(1979–2009)

Zakhar Rokhlin, a social anthropologist and teacher, the last director of the New Jewish School pedagogical club, was born in Leningrad on January 4, 1979.

Upon graduation from the Saint-Petersburg Art Lyceum in 1996, he was matriculated at the Department of Sociology of Saint-Petersburg State University.

As a sophomore, he began to make sociological surveys on Jewish topics. In 1999, Zakhar became one of the founders and a research fellow of the New Jewish School pedagogical club — a unique network for professionals in Jewish education that served as an umbrella and a center for teaching methods for all Jewish schools and informal educational organizations in the former Soviet Union.

In 2002 he graduated from the university and spent a year in the Jerusalem Makhon Meir yeshiva. Upon his return to Russia, he continued his sociological and pedagogical activities.

Zakhar was the author of several dozen articles on the problems of Jewish education, which were published, inter alia, in the *Jews of Euro-Asia*, *Community Life*, and *New Jewish School* journals, as well as in the *Euro-Asian Jewish Year Book*. In 2002, his book on Jewish schools in the FSU, written in cooperation with Hana Rotman, was published.

In 2005 Zakhar Rokhlin became executive director of the New Jewish School, which organized many programs (seminars, workshops, etc.) for Jewish teachers and published books and methodological materials on Jewish education. Among the programs led by him were the *Art and Tradition in Jewish School* series of seminars and the *Isaac's Wells* project for publication of the *Five Megillot* with new comments.

For several years Zakhar actively participated in the research expeditions supported by the EAJC to study Jewish monuments of the Diaspora. In 2006, the New Jewish School and the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies held a unique field seminar for Jewish teachers and painters in the Crimea, initiated by Zakhar; in 2007 he organized a student expedition to research the Jewish monuments of the Western Ukraine.

In 2007 Zakhar Rokhlin began work at the Saint Petersburg Choral Synagogue as a lecturer and head of educational programs. At that time he began to write *A Course of Jewish History*.

In the last months of his life Zakhar lived in Moscow, where he continued to work on various sociological surveys, articles, and translations.

Zakhar Rokhlin died of a sudden heart attack, nine days after his thirtieth birthday.

Zakhar was a thoroughly gifted person, a brilliant poet, artist, and lecturer. His amazing personality, graceful style, and unique sense of humor will always be honored by his relatives, friends and colleagues.

# ANTI-SEMITISM

## DESECRATION OF GRAVES AND COMBATING THIS PHENOMENON

*Expert group on problems of anti-Semitism  
under the World Jewish Congress (WJC)  
FSU Committee*

In the recent years, the lead position among crimes and offences based on hatred towards Jews<sup>•</sup>, registered in the FSU, has been occupied by vandalism and desecration of Jewish graves and memorials to victims of the Holocaust. A certain increase in the amount of such crimes was noticed in 2006-2007. Thus, there were 5 such cases in Russia in 2006, 14 (!) in 2007, and six in the first six months of 2008. Registered in Ukraine were respectively 6 (8), 9 (11), and 3 (5) such cases, and in Belarus – 3, 5, and 1. Reports of grave and memorial desecration arrive from other FSU states as well. Thus, the Jewish cemetery in Batumi was reported defiled in May 2008.

This increase has several reasons. Graves as well as premises occupied by Jewish organizations, are the only “effort-worthy objects” anti-Semites can easily recognize, as Jews themselves are difficult to spot in a crowd (except for traditionally dressed religious Jews, who are very few). Also, probably radical anti-Semites think desecrating graves safer than attacks on communal centers and synagogues. Because of the lack of security, cameras, and witnesses, the possibility of apprehending the culprits and establishing their identity is severely restricted.

Since the Jewish communities are unable to handle the problem of cemetery vandalism themselves, it is natural that the state interferes: meaning both that the communities address the authorities demanding for the vandals to be punished, and that preventive measures are suggested.

In terms of responsibility for committed crimes, the criminal codes of virtually all the states of the FSU, and Georgia, contain special clauses on penalty for desecration of graves and defilement of memorials (see Appendix). Unfortunately, not every state has special regulations for defiling a grave or

memorial for reasons of ethnic, racial or religious hatred. Such regulations are lacking in the criminal codes of Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Kirgizstan. Even if such a lack is understandable in the case of Transcaucasian and Central-Asian Islamic states as such cases are extremely rare there, but this is clearly not a normal situation for Ukraine and Belarus, since as a result the xenophobic element of the crime goes unpunished.<sup>1</sup> The general legal norm is that the ideological type of a crime is an aggravating circumstance. In the criminal codes of many FSU states, this norm applies, e.g., to violent crimes. The situation of vandalism is obviously out of step. It seems that lobbying respective amendments to the criminal legislation might become one of the foremost courses of action for Jewish organizations in these states.

Quite often Jewish community officers face unwillingness on the part of the legal authorities to investigate the facts of defilement of graves and memorials to victims of the Holocaust. This is probably caused not as much by anti-Semitism as reluctance to undertake a rather difficult investigation (according to 2007 data, about 70% of the people who had committed cemetery vandalism were never apprehended<sup>2</sup>) which will most likely spoil reports of crime detection.

Practically the only way of fighting such “silent sabotage” is extensive publicity of the event, supported by detailed and thorough evidence. Therefore, when a case of desecration is discovered, the Jewish community leaders must collect information and give the event as much publicity as possible.

If a Jewish grave or a memorial to victims of the Holocaust is found disordered, the head of the community (or one of the activists) must visit the site of the crime in order to record as meticulously as possible the following information: the precise number of damaged gravestones (memorials), the type of damage, the presence of swastika images, anti-Semitic inscriptions, etc. Damages and anti-Semitic graffiti must by all means be photographed.

Next, as the authorities get alerted, news of the event in the form of a short notice with photographs attached must be emailed to the leaders of the centralized organization the community belongs to, and to the editors of Jewish and non-Jewish media. The same parties must be informed if the authorities refuse to initiate a criminal case, and after the case has been brought to court and a sentence passed. In this case publicity will be additional motivation for the legal authorities to carry out an effective investigation.

As it is widely known that the best way to fight crime is to prevent it, the Jewish community must also address the issue of preventing desecration of cemeteries. There are several actions which ought to diminish the amount of such crimes considerably.

Firstly, it is propaganda – lectures on the amorality of such actions among schoolchildren, students, and learners at secondary professional-technical institutions, among which, in fact, most of the cemetery vandals are found.

As for the purely material element of this preventive work, three measures must be taken:

Tall fences erected around cemeteries, many of which are not even enclosed. Such fences just might cool down the enthusiasm of potential vandals. As most municipalities in the FSU are financially weak, part of the expenses could be paid by the central government (in Russia, it is by state financing that, e.g., cemeteries in former “closed cities” get repaired<sup>3</sup>) – people lying in the graves did, after all, pay the state taxes, meant partly to provide them with peace and safety, both in their lifetimes and after. Some part may be paid by the Jewish communities. Note the interesting initiative of the authorities in St. Petersburg, where in August 2008 it was decided to allocate 1.2 million rubles to restore gravestones damaged by vandals.

Stationary militia posts created by the cemetery gates, denying entry to suspicious visitors at inopportune times or with malicious intent.

Accepting that cemetery vandalism is a socially dangerous action and including respective amendments in the criminal laws.

As it is hardly only Jewish cemeteries that are defiled (in Russia alone there were 1575 cases of cemetery vandalism initiated between September 2006 and August 2007<sup>4</sup>), this work ought to be conducted together with representatives of other traditional confessions, local authorities, etc. Such cooperation will, a) increase the lobbyist resources required for these programs to be realized (particularly the amendments to legislation ruling obligatory security at cemeteries) and b) neutralize the usual accusations that Jews attempt to only use public resources for their own good. Should this program be successfully realized, the issue of cemetery vandalism will be largely reduced to zero.

## **Appendix**

### **Legislation on desecration of graves and memorials in the states of the FSU and Georgia**

#### ***Criminal code of Azerbaijan***

Article 245. Desecration of the graves

Desecration of a grave or corpse – punished with corrective labor for the term of up to two years or imprisonment for the term of up to five years.<sup>5</sup>

***Criminal code of Armenia***

Article 265. Outrageous treatment of dead bodies or burial places

1. Outrageous treatment of a dead body or a burial place, destruction, damage or desecration of cemetery facilities or gravestones, or items allocated for memorial ceremonies, is punished with a fine in the amount of 300 to 500 minimal salaries, or with arrest for the term of up to 2 months.

2. The same acts perpetrated:

1) by a group with prior agreement, or by organized group;

2) on account of ethnic, racial or religious hatred;

3) by stealing items in or on graves,

are punished with corrective labor for the term of up to two years, or with arrest for 1 to 3 months or with imprisonment of up to 3 years<sup>6</sup>.

***Criminal code of Belarus***

Article 347. Outrageous treatment of dead bodies or graves

1. Outrageous treatment of a dead body or a grave, or stealing a dead body, or theft of items found in the burial place, is punished with a fine, or with arrest for the term up to six months, or restricting freedom for the term of up to three years, or imprisonment for the same term.

2. The same acts, perpetrated in regard to a common grave or a grave of a Defender of the Motherland, are punished with arrest for the term of three to six months, or restricting freedom for the term of up to five years, or imprisonment for the same term.<sup>7</sup>

***Criminal code of Georgia***

Article 258. Disrespect towards the dead

1. Desecration of a dead body or of a burial place, as well as destruction or damage of a gravestone or other construction – is punished with a fine, or with social services for the term of a hundred and twenty to a hundred and eighty hours, or corrective labor for the term of up to one year, or arrest for the term of up to two months, or imprisonment for the term of up to one year.

2. Theft of items that are in the burial place or on the surface of the burial place, is punished with a fine or with imprisonment for the term of up to two years.

3. The same acts, perpetrated:

a) by a group of individuals;

b) on account of racial, religious, national or ethnic intolerance;

c) with violence or with threat of violence,

are punished with restricting freedom for the term of up to three years, or arrest for the term of three to six months, or imprisonment for the term of up to three years.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Criminal code of Kazakhstan***

Article 275. Outrageous treatment of dead bodies and burial places

Outrageous treatment of dead bodies, or destruction, damage, or defilement of burial places, gravestones or cemetery buildings, allocated for burial or memorial ceremonies, are punished with a fine in the amount of one hundred to five hundred monthly wages or of the salary or other income of the offender during one to five months, or with social services for the term of one hundred and twenty to one hundred and eighty hours, or with corrective labor for the term of six months to one year, or with arrest for the term of up to four months, or with imprisonment for the term of up to three years.

2. Same acts, perpetrated:

- a) repeatedly;
  - b) by a group of individuals, by a group with prior agreement, or by an organized group;
  - c) on account of national, racial, or religious hatred or hostility;
  - d) with violence or with threat of violence,
- are punished with restricting freedom for the term of up to five years or with imprisonment for the same term.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Criminal code of Kirgizstan***

Article 263. Outrageous treatment of dead bodies and their burial place

Outrageous treatment of dead bodies, or destruction, damage, or defilement of burial places, gravestones, as well as theft of items found in or on the grave – are punished with social services for the term of up one hundred and eighty to two hundred and forty hours, or with imprisonment for the term of up to three years.

Same acts, perpetrated:

by a group of individuals;

repeatedly,

are punished with imprisonment for the term of three to five years.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Criminal code of Moldova***

Article 222. Outrageous treatment of a grave

1). Outrageous treatment by different ways of a grave, a monument or a funeral urn or of dead bodies, as well as theft of objects located in or on the

grave is punished by a fine of up to 300 arbitrary units, or by nonpaid labor for the benefit of the society for the term of 180 to 240 hours, imprisonment for the term of up to 2 years.

2). The same acts, perpetrated:

a) by two or more individuals;

b) on account of social, national, racial or religious hostility or hatred, are punished by a fine of 400 to 600 arbitrary units, or by imprisonment for the term of 2 to 5 years.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Criminal code of the Russian Federation***

Article 244. Outrageous treatment of places of burial

1. Outrageous treatment of dead bodies, or destruction, damage, or defilement of burial places, gravestones or cemetery buildings, allocated for burial or memorial ceremonies, are punished with a fine in the amount of up to forty thousand rubles, or of the salary or other income of the offender during up to three months, or with social services for the term of one hundred and twenty to one hundred and eighty hours, or with corrective labor for the term of up to one year, or with arrest for the term of up to three months.

2. Same acts, perpetrated:

a) by a group of individuals, by a group with prior agreement, or by an organized group;

b) on account of political, ideological, racial, national or religious hatred or hostility, or on account of hatred or hostility towards any social group, as well as directed at a sculptural or architectural construction dedicated to the fight against Nazism or to the victims of Nazism, or a place of burial of people who participated in the fight against Nazism;

c) with violence or with threat of violence,

are punished with restricting freedom for the term of up to three years or with arrest for the term of three to six months, or with imprisonment for the term of up to five years.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Criminal code of Tajikistan***

Article 243. Outrageous treatment of dead bodies and their burial place

1). Outrageous treatment of dead bodies, or destruction, damage, or defilement of burial places, gravestones or cemetery buildings, allocated for burial or memorial ceremonies, are punished with a fine in the amount of three hundred to five hundred minimal wages, or with restricting freedom for the term of up to three years.

2). Same acts, perpetrated:

a) by a group of individuals with prior agreement, or by an organized group;

b) on account of national, racial, local, or religious hatred or hostility;

c) with regard to a sculptural or architectural construction dedicated to the fight against Nazism or to the victims of Nazism, or a place of burial of people who participated in the fight against Nazism;

d) with violence or with threat of violence,  
are punished with imprisonment for the term of two to five years.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Criminal code of Uzbekistan***

Article 134. Outrageous treatment of a grave

Outrageous treatment of a grave or a dead body, as well as extraction of items found on the dead body, on the grave, or inside the grave, is punished with a fine in the amount of fifty to one hundred minimal wages, or with corrective labor for the term of up to three years, or with imprisonment for the term of three to five years.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Criminal code of Ukraine***

Article 297. Outrageous treatment of a grave

Outrageous treatment of a grave, or a different burial place, or a dead body, or an urn containing the ashes of the deceased, as well as theft of items found in the burial place or on the dead body, is punished with a fine in the amount of up to one hundred exemption limits of income, or with arrest for the term of up to six months, or with restricting freedom for the term of up to three years, or with imprisonment for the same term.<sup>15</sup>

## **Endnotes**

• Of course, this is not about “everyday” vandalism, rather – ideologically motivated cases, when the details of the crime allow to state clearly that it was committed on account of anti-Semitism (e.g. swastikas drawn on the defiled graves, anti-Semitic graffiti made, etc.).

<sup>1</sup> For fairness’ sake we must note that this does not prevent the criminals from being punished if their identity is determined, however the lack of legal recognition of the actual xenophobic element of the crime is bewildering. For example, the vandals who defiled the Jewish cemetery in Odessa in early 2007 were sentenced to two years of imprisonment according to art. 297 of the Criminal Code (see Appendix), but the court declined the charge of art. 161 (“rousing national animosity”) which the representatives of the authorities and the Jewish community were insisting to have applied.

<sup>2</sup> Погромы на российских кладбищах приобрели угрожающий размах // Newsru.com, 5 сентября 2007 г. (<http://www.newsru.com/russia/05sep2007/vandaly.html>)

<sup>3</sup> См. «Перечень строек и объектов, финансируемых за счет субсидий, выделяемых в соответствии со статьей 14 Федерального Закона «О Федеральном бюджете на 2008 год и на плановый период 2009 и 2010 годов» бюджетам субъектов Российской Федерации на развитие и поддержку социальной и инженерной инфраструктуры закрытых административно-территориальных образований» / Распоряжение правительства РФ № 317-р от 13.03.2008 г. «Об утверждении перечня строек и объектов, финансируемых за счет субсидий, выделяемых в соответствии со статьей 14 Федерального Закона «О Федеральном бюджете на 2008 год и на плановый период 2009 и 2010 годов» бюджетам субъектов Российской Федерации на развитие и поддержку социальной и инженерной инфраструктуры закрытых административно-территориальных образований // Интернет-версия системы Консультант-Плюс (<http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=EXP;n=421520;div=LAW;mb=LAW;opt=1;ts=D7722F499AB6610509AB886DE31B0C5E;dst=0;offs=0>)

<sup>4</sup> Погромы на российских кладбищах приобрели угрожающий размах // Интернет-сайт Newsru.com, 5 сентября 2007 г. (<http://www.newsru.com/russia/05sep2007/vandaly.html>)

<sup>5</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Азербайджанской Республики [Электронный ресурс]: Legislationline – свободная онлайн база данных законодательства/ Уголовный Кодекс Азербайджанской Республики. – Режим доступа: <http://www.legislationline.org/ru/legislation.php?tid=1&lid=6395>

<sup>6</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Республики Армения [Электронный ресурс] Интернет-сайт Национального Собрания Республики Армения / Уголовный Кодекс Республики Армения – Режим доступа: <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=1349&lang=rus#25>

<sup>7</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Республики Беларусь [Электронный ресурс] Национальный правовой Интернет-портал Республики Беларусь/ Уголовный Кодекс Республики Беларусь. – Режим доступа: <http://www.pravo.by/webnpa/text.asp?RN=hk9900275#&Article=347>

<sup>8</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Грузии [Электронный ресурс] Закон–Интернет–журнал Ассоциации юристов Приморья/ Уголовный Кодекс Грузии – Режим доступа: [http://law.vl.ru/comments/show\\_article.php?art\\_id=489&sec\\_id=61&law\\_id=12&law\\_name=%CC%E5%E6%E4%F3%ED%E0%F0%EE%E4%ED%FB%E5+%EE%F2%ED%EE%F8%E5&sec\\_name=%D3%E3%EE%EB%EE%E2%ED%FB%E5+%EA%EE%E4%E5%EA%F1%FB+%a&rt\\_name=%D3%E3%EE%EB%EE%E2%ED%FB%E9+%EA%EE%E4%E5%EA&page=62](http://law.vl.ru/comments/show_article.php?art_id=489&sec_id=61&law_id=12&law_name=%CC%E5%E6%E4%F3%ED%E0%F0%EE%E4%ED%FB%E5+%EE%F2%ED%EE%F8%E5&sec_name=%D3%E3%EE%EB%EE%E2%ED%FB%E5+%EA%EE%E4%E5%EA%F1%FB+%a&rt_name=%D3%E3%EE%EB%EE%E2%ED%FB%E9+%EA%EE%E4%E5%EA&page=62)

<sup>9</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Республики Казахстан [Электронный ресурс]: Legislationline – свободная онлайн база данных законодательства/ Уголовный Кодекс Республики Казахстан. – Режим доступа: <http://www.legislationline.org/ru/legislation.php?tid=1&lid=6497>

<sup>10</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Кыргызской Республики [Электронный ресурс]: Legislationline – свободная онлайн база данных законодательства/ Уголовный Кодекс Кыргызской Республики. – Режим доступа: <http://www.legislationline.org/ru/legislation.php?tid=1&lid=6579>

<sup>11</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Республики Молдова [Электронный ресурс]: Legislationline – свободная онлайн база данных законодательства/ Уголовный Кодекс Республики Молдова. – Режим доступа: <http://www.legislationline.org/ru/legislation.php?tid=1&lid=7028>

<sup>12</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Российской Федерации [Электронный ресурс]: Интернет-версия системы Консультант-Плюс/ Уголовный Кодекс Российской Федерации. – Режим доступа: <http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=LAW;n=78554;div=LAW;mb=LAW;opt=1;ts=2DCFF48E91DEC89612C2F72F06C9B93>>

<sup>13</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Республики Таджикистан [Электронный ресурс]: Legislationline – свободная онлайн база данных законодательства/ Уголовный Кодекс Республики Таджикистан. – Режим доступа: <http://www.legislationline.org/ru/legislation.php?tid=1&lid=6621>

<sup>14</sup> Уголовный Кодекс Республики Узбекистан [Электронный ресурс]: Legislationline – свободная онлайн база данных законодательства/ Уголовный Кодекс Республики Узбекистан. – Режим доступа: <http://www.legislationline.org/ru/legislation.php?tid=1&lid=6673>

<sup>15</sup> КРИМІНАЛЬНИЙ КОДЕКС УКРАЇНИ [Электронный ресурс] : Интернет сайт Верховной рады Украины/ Кримінальний Кодекс України. – Режим доступа: <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?page=7&nreg=2341-14>, <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?page=8&nreg=2341-14>

## REVIEW OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE FSU (2007-2008)\*

### BELARUS

Although anti-Semitism is not a part of the national policy, officials do display a prejudiced, biased approach to the Jewish people. The government of today's attitude towards "the Jewish question" can be characterized using the famous formula: "Anything for Jews as individuals, nothing for Jews as a nation". In a state where all economical activity is centralized and controlled by the state authorities, there are no state-funded independent Jewish comprehensive schools, Jewish newspapers, or cultural institutions (clubs, theatres, museums, concert ensembles, etc.). The Jewish community receives no airtime on the radio and television, publishing is nonexistent. Scholarly, encyclopedic, reference, and educational literature tends to overlook the Jewish history in Belarus and the tragedy of the Holocaust. In a number of cities (Minsk, Mogilev, Brest, Borisov), restitution to the Jewish communities of buildings once built on Jewish funds and having belonged to Jews is a burning issue. Jewish non-governmental and religious organizations are forced to rent premises.

On the other hand, the rigid state control over every field of public life in Belarus has led to the absence here of phenomena such as assaults and murders of Jews or synagogue arson. The Jewish community is troubled instead by recurrent anti-Semitic propaganda on the part of political figures,

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\* Review prepared by Vyacheslav Likhachev on the basis of the article collection: anti-Semitism in Australia and Eurasia – 2007. Ed.-comp. V. Likhachev. Kiev: Program board of the Eurasian Jewish Congress, 2008. Papers by Ya. Basin, V. Likhachev, M. Khersonsky, S. Charny were used for the review. Information on Russia and Ukraine has been updated (as compared to the text published in the above mentioned collection of articles) on the basis of monitoring carried out by the anti-Semitism Problems Expert Group under the World Jewish Congress' FSU Committee.

distribution of anti-Semitic literature, and neo-Nazi graffiti in the city streets. The pride of the Jews received a severe blow when the President Alexander Lukashenko made his famous inappropriate remark.

On October 12, 2007, at a press-conference for Russian media in Minsk, this is what Alexander Lukashenko said: “If you have been to Bobruysk, have you seen the state of the city? It was frightening to enter, such a pigsty. It was a Jewish city mostly, you know how Jews treat the places they live. Take Israel, I have been there... Absolutely no offence meant, but they do not care all that much for their lawns to be mown, like it is done in Moscow, like Russians and Belarusians do. What a city it was... As long as there was a place to live, it was all fine. Wooden houses were fine, so were brick ones. Paved streets were good, and if not, nobody cared either way. Such a city it was. We have fixed it up and now we say to the Israeli Jews – come back, guys. I told them – come back with money.”

That said, this incident was unique for the Belarusian history: never before had official statements by government officials touched upon the national features of a people. This utterance showed the stereotypes of the public conscious in national relations.

President A. Lukashenko himself has spoken quite respectfully before about the Jewish people and its input into Belarus’ national development. It seems that such an outburst of anti-Semitic rhetoric was strongly influenced by the presence in the president’s immediate circle of several odious figures (writer and publicist Eduard Skobelev, parliamentarian Sergey Kostyan, film director Alexander Azarenok), who by their actions compromise the republic before the civilized world, presenting it as an anti-Semitic state. For example, E. Skobelev has been Belarus’ main author of anti-Semitic articles for almost twenty years. Suffice it to mention his absolutely abhorrent article on the “Practical Use of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, published this August in Moscow’s chauvinistic newspaper, the Russian Reporter, openly available for purchase in Belarusian state press stands.

An alerting fact is that several anti-Semitic articles appearing in the Belarusian press, particularly the newspapers “Belarusian Communist” and “Mogilev News”, have quoted openly and in a positive context sources published in Nazi Germany; also, swastikas, SS lightning signs, and threatening notes addressed to Jews dominate the street graffiti.

The stand of the interior authorities and the public prosecutor’s office is shocking: in the last 20 years they have not instituted (or have not brought to court) a single case against vandalism at Jewish cemeteries, profanation of memorials to the victims of Nazism and Stalinism, or publishing and

distribution of anti-Semitic literature. Nor have the authorities taken administrative measures against The Orthodox (now – Christian) Initiative Ltd., whose actions of rousing national hatred and consolidating persons of anti-Semitic beliefs were openly denounced in 2006 even by Orthodox Church hierarchs.

Currently Jewish property (such as cemeteries, memorials to victims of Nazism, cultural centers) has ceased to function as the main target for marginal neo-Nazi gangs. In 2007 a Muslim cemetery in Stolin and the fence around the House of Charity in Minsk were defiled, signifying a dramatic increase in the activity of radical right-wing groups which have experienced no resistance from the state for many years.

### LITHUANIA

Unfortunately, in the 18 years of Lithuania's independence, reports of vandalism at old Jewish cemeteries and WWII massacre sites have become habitual. 2007 was no exception.

In early July 2007 the police of Rokiskis received news that a road sign has been destroyed near the village of Bajorai, at the site where 3,000 Jews were shot in 1941. The sign was a column of polished black granite, showing the direction and the distance to the Holocaust victims' burial place. These road sign columns were erected in the fall of 2003 on the initiative of Lord Greville Janner, ex-vice-president of the World Jewish Congress, with the support of the British Embassy in Lithuania. Around 190 columns were placed all over Lithuania – as many as there are Jewish massacre sites.

Several days later, having learned about the act of vandalism by Bajorai, temporary acting head of the village seniunija Vytautas Padvaiskis arrived to inspect the memorial and saw that it was not just the column that had suffered from the assault: a 30-metre section of the iron fence around the memorial itself had been wrenched out and prepared for transportation as scrap metal. The fence was restored, secured and repainted, but a week later another section was broken away by the thieves.

On September 23 this year, the Memorial Day for the Genocide of the Lithuanian Jews, as members of the Jewish community and society of Panevezhys entered the woodland of Zhaliogji Giria, they saw the polished black granite column smashed beyond repair with a hammer or an iron bar and smeared with black paint. The paint was fresh, which meant that the vandals had consciously scheduled the attack on the Memorial Day.

Barbarian assaults on the Jewish mass burial site in this woodland have happened before: last May a swastika, a stylized SS sign, and an offensive Nazi slogan were painted in black on the memorial to the dead. Evidently, the attacks are purposeful and systematic.

On October 24, 2007 the police of Kupishkis were informed that several gravestones had been knocked down at the old Jewish cemetery whose restoration in 2004 had been funded by descendants of Kupishkis Jews in Israel, the USA, South Africa, Great Britain, and Australia. The culprits have not been found.

Unknown vandals defiled the memorial burial site of Holocaust victims in Pivonija forest next to Ukmerge on November 12, 2007. As the police arrived to the scene, they found the granite road sign pointing to the memorial destroyed, and the memorial itself painted with the words “Juden raus” and a swastika. The candles were broken and scattered, the flower baskets trampled and thrown away. There are 10,000 shot Jews from Ukmerge resting in Pivonija forest.

This is not the first case of vandalism: several years ago the memorial was defiled the same way, the culprits remaining unknown as well.

The most extensive destruction was wreaked by the vandals at the currently operating Jewish cemetery in Suderves street on June 25, and September 7, 2006, 19 gravestones seriously damaged or destroyed in the first attack, and 17 in the second. The actions of the vandals caused both moral and significant material damage.

The crime was severely condemned by all the executive authorities of Lithuania: the president, the Seim speaker, and the head of government. The cemetery assault was also denounced by the speakers of the U.S. and German embassies. The mayor of Vilnius supported the restoration of the destroyed gravestones. Police investigation on the acts of vandalism proved unsuccessful.

## **MOLDOVA**

Moldova's peculiarity is a strong foreign influence. Significant in this context is the decision of the Bucharest appeal court to partially exculpate the main butcher of Moldovan Jews, the Fascist dictator of Romania Ion Antonescu. This decision was made on December 5, 2006 and became generally known in 2007. Ion Antonescu was sentenced by military tribunal in 1946 to be executed for crimes committed in the first period of the war on

the territory of Bessarabia and Transnistria, then under the administration of Romanian occupation government. The court overturned Antonescu's conviction with regard to Romania's participation on the side of Nazi Germany in the first stage of the war against the USSR. The court recognized the "liberation" of Bessarabia and North Bukovina, carried out by the Romanian army in the summer of 1941 "in the circumstances of a state of emergency until the removal of direct threat from the part of the Soviet army." The court's decision was motivated by the fact that in 1946 the National tribunal did not know of the existence of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which became the "foundation of gross territorial aggression endured by Romania in the summer of 1940."

The peculiarities of the Holocaust in the Romanian zone of occupation are probably the main topic of historical anti-Semitic statements in Moldova. For the pro-Romanian ultra-nationalists, the rehabilitation of Antonescu's regime is a first-order task, solving which would simplify future anti-Semitic propaganda significantly.

In 2007, at an international book fair hosted in the assembly hall of Chisinau Central Library, "The Red Week: June 28 – July 3 1940; or Bessarabia and the Jews" was displayed, an openly anti-Semitic book of 300-odd pages, recently republished with additions for the third time. Its author is the Romanian writer of Bessarabian descent, Paul Goma, currently residing in Paris. The book contains groundless accusations towards the Jews of Moldova, who allegedly "attacked the withdrawing Romanian troops" in 1940, when the USSR annexed the territory of Moldova. The author is of the opinion that the Holocaust was merely "the Romanian taking vengeance on the Jew." The Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Moldova and the Jewish Congress of Moldova approached the state's Prosecutor General with a petition to prohibit the book, after which it was called in.

The ideas of negationism, denial of the Holocaust in Romania, Moldova, and Transnistria, are popular even amongst professional historians. A negationist approach to the Holocaust, as well as attempts to prevent its teaching in the schools and universities of the state, is a form of rehabilitating Fascism and is anti-Semitic in character. Some professionals are notably opposed to the monograph by Sergey Nazaria PhD, "Holocaust in the Territory of Moldova and Adjoining Regions of Ukraine in 1941–1944", recommended for print by the State Institute of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova and by the Moldovan Association of Former Jewish Prisoners of Nazi Ghettos and Concentration Camps.

These factors explain such outbursts of anti-Semitism in recent years as acts of vandalism at the cemeteries of Tiraspol, Chisinau, Soroki.

## RUSSIA

### **Political anti-Semitism**

In 2007 anti-Semitism finally became an integral part of the Russian nationalist ideology. The anti-Semitic element even made its way into the speeches of those nationalist leaders who used to strive to come across as seemly. A typical example is the leader of the Movement Against Illegal Immigration, A. Potkin (Belov), who has taken habitual liberties with anti-Semitic passages in his public speeches in 2007, speaking of ritual murders, the Jewish character of the government, etc. This is explained to a large extent by feuds emerging in the nationalist circles, wherein “conniving with the Jews” or the Jewish descent of the opponents are some of the main accusations. In these circumstances, the nationalist leaders had to try to be “more Catholic than the Pope” to prove their purity. The previously voiced ideas of the possible cooperation of the Russian nationalists and the Jewish communities in the fight against the Muslims and the Chinese have virtually disappeared.

M. Nazarov, one of the renowned ideologists and propagandists of contemporary Russian anti-Semitism, published a commentary on his website in early May 2007, stating that WWII was the consequence of “the Jewish-Masonic rulers of the world” attempting to “suppress” “the national-authoritarian reaction of Fascism” (which, by Nazarov’s estimation, “was at an acceptable spiritual level... in some countries”) with the help of “useful idiot Hitler.”

The same process has happened in the minds of a significant part of ordinary radical nationalists a while ago. Nationalistic public events often featured anti-Semitic rhetoric elements. The first official meeting, dedicated de facto to the memory of Hitler, took place in downtown Moscow on April 21, 2007.

The Russian March, which took place in Moscow on November 4, employed the anti-Semitic rhetoric widely. The participants of the procession and the meeting chanted “Death to the zhids!”, “Down with the Jewish yoke!”

Anti-Semitic slogans could often be heard at Communist Party’s events as well. For example, such posters as “Down with Jewvision! Russia needs Russian television!” and “We demand de-Zionation of TV!” were noticed

at the march to Ostankino, organized by the CPRF on June 28 in Moscow. Caricatures depicting television reporters Andrey Karaulov and Nikolay Svanidze in yarmulkes were scattered on the pavement.

A rather prominent anti-Semitic element is noticeable in the ideology of the senior generation of CPRF members. K. Dushenov, editor of the newspaper *Orthodox Russia*, had interviewed G. Zyuganov in 2003; the interview was published in August 2007. The CPRF leader quoted “Zionization” and “outrageous national misbalance” in the organization of the government, “the Zionist capital taking an aggressive part in the destruction of the Russian economy and plundering its national property,” Jews “seizing” industry and the media. This publication caused no protest on the part of the CPRF.

Attempts have been made to unite anti-Semitism with anti-Caucasian attitudes and Islamophobia, more prevalent in the public opinion. Case in point: D. Savin, head of the Chita department of the Union of the Russian People, published an article in 2007, stating that Chechen and Albanian-Kosovan people are tools in the hands of the “Jewish-Mason backstage,” which is preparing for the de-Christianization of the planet in order to establish world supremacy. The Union of the Russian People published a letter on October 26, encouraging everyone, both Russian and not, to support the nationalists against the “common enemy” who is allegedly “trying to play us off against each other in order to weaken Russia. To grind us all down and turn us into slaves for the global electronic concentration camp.”

There is no united “anti-Semitic party”. Anti-Semitism serves as the ideological basis for about a dozen organizations – both ultra-Orthodox (notably the Union of the Russian People with Nazarov and Turik) and neo-pagan.

Although the Duma elections passed with hardly any xenophobic and anti-Semitic rhetoric, we can expect anti-Semitism to be actively employed during the presidential campaign. After the announcement that D. Medvedev would be taking over from V. Putin as President, quite a few nationalist websites emphasized his own and his wife’s Jewish descent. The most “attentive” among the nationalists noticed that the day before this announcement Mr. Medvedev visited the Moscow Jewish Community Center, treating this as proof of “Jewish power” in Russia. Allegedly, Mr. Medvedev was supposed to go through a selection process and secure the support of the Russian Jewish community. It is, however, unclear to what extent these “discoveries” are inspired by rival elite groups, trying to use the Russian nationalists to their advantage.

### **Assaults: growth or decrease?**

According to the monitoring by the Expert group, there were ten cases of applied force registered in 2007 (seven in 2006), nine cases of attacks on synagogues, community centers, and other Jewish organization premises, and desecration thereof (16 in 2006), 14 acts of cemetery vandalism (five in 2006).

These figures are generally similar to the ones collected by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia: 34 cases of threats and hooliganism, five cases of applied force, 11 assaults on synagogues and community centers, 25 cases of graffiti or anti-Semitic inscriptions on municipal property, seven cases of cemetery vandalism in 2006.

It can hardly be claimed on the basis of these figures that 2007 saw a decline in the amount of anti-Semitic outbursts, as did the FJCR in its statement on December 25, 2007. In any case, even FJCR officials insist that a turnaround in the situation will only be achieved if the government actively opposes anti-Semitism, prohibiting in particular open retail of anti-Semitic literature. Rather, several multidirectional tendencies can be observed, each with its own reasons.

As for assaults against Jews, their amount is in fact on the same level – low enough considering that anti-Semitism is now an inherent part of the nationalist ideology. The reason might be that Jews are still difficult to single out from people of other nationalities, except for Caucasus Jews, Georgian and Bokharan Jews, orthodox Jews, and Jews living in small villages where everyone is well familiar with everyone else's lives. These three categories of Jews were, in fact, the usual victims of assault. The decrease in the number of assaults and vandalism attacks on synagogues and community centers is in fact a reversion to the average annual figure, caused both by a lack of an impressive example to follow (like A. Koptsev's assault on the Bolshaya Bronnaya synagogue in 2006) and by fear of severe punishment, instilled by the heavy sentence same Koptsev received in the fall of 2006. The assumption that the general level of anti-Semitism is not diminishing can be upheld by the dramatic increase in obviously anti-Semitic cemetery vandalism (memorials to Holocaust victims being defiled as well), which is probably considered a safer pastime by the young nationalists.

Also noteworthy is the fact that there may be more assaults than stated above, because far from all become known right away. This is not just because some of the desecrated cemeteries are remote, but also due to a grim peculiarity noticed in 2007, to wit, the unwillingness of Jewish communities to report attacks. For example, the assault on a Jewish school in Bryansk in late

October – early November 2007 and the assault on the Astrakhan synagogue in October 2007 were only reported a month later.

### **Anti-Semitism in the media and book publishing**

As public events will not attract any more new members to anti-Semitic organizations, their main bet is propaganda published through the media, websites (popular among these is rusidea.org, the webpage of Orthodox fundamentalist and anti-Semite M. Nazarov), and book publishing. Especially alarming is the fact that anti-Semitic literature is printed by seemingly respectable publishing houses (“Algorithm”, “Knizhnyi Mir”) and as such finds its way into bookstores and major book fairs in Moscow – Books of Russia and the Moscow International Book Fair (and from there – again to large bookstores, turning those into platforms of anti-Semitic propaganda). The management of the fairs claims that demands of non-admission of the above publishers constitute censorship and are therefore against the Constitution of the Russian Federation, international standards, and even common sense. The situation remains unchanged despite the signing in late August 2007 of the Agreement of non-admission to their stands of books promoting fascism, xenophobia, violence, cruelty, and provoking national hatred, on the initiative of the Federal Print and Mass Communications Agency. The importance these publishers place in their admission to book fairs showed in the scandal they organized in response to being banned from participation in the NON/FICTION fair. It was a whole campaign in sympathetic media with a recurring motif of the ban being “oligarch intrigues” and “a breach of freedom of speech and citizens’ constitutional rights.”

Another disgraceful event, demonstrating how little attention was (and is) spared the printing of anti-Semitic literature, was that in late August 2007 “The Story of Adolf Hitler” by Annemarie Stiehler (first printed in Germany in 1940) was translated and published without any commentary whatsoever. The fact that this news was soon forgotten after causing just minor indignation is an outrage in itself.

Despite anti-Semitic publications appearing much less frequently in the media than their anti-Caucasian or anti-Chinese, several alarming occurrences in 2007 were indicative of the possibility of the anti-Semitic discourse returning to the television screens and press. Such was, first of all, the screening on federal television channels of the series “Stalin.live” and the film “Leon Trotsky. The Secret of a Worldwide Revolution” in January and February 2007. Both the series (especially the interview with its director G. Lyubomirov in the Moscow News) and the film reproduced without critical

analysis anti-Semitic myths about the final years of the Stalin era and Trotsky's alleged collaboration with Jewish bankers in the U.S. The aforementioned Moscow News has printed some anti-Semitic material as well, namely articles (in March, May, and December 2007) by chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ex-vice-president of the Russian Federation, Evgeny Primakov, featuring post-Soviet propaganda clichés to characterize Israel, and articles by State Duma member A. Fomenko on the relations between Russia and the USA, quoting anti-Semitic myths about the leading role of Jews in the deterioration of Russian-U.S. relations in 1911, Jews having financed the 1917 revolution, and the decisive influence of the Jewish lobby on the policies of the USA in the Middle East.

### **Displays of anti-Semitism on the part of government officials**

In 2007 public displays of anti-Semitism were usually ventured by legislative power officials – Duma members from opposition groups. When court proceedings were instituted against the famous nationalist and anti-Semite B. Mironov, State Duma members D. Rogozin, V. Ilyukhin, and Yu. Savelyev, as well as member of the municipal Council of Novosibirsk A. Lyulko, expressed their wish to become his public defenders. Finally, D. Rogozin took the part and proceeded to make several anti-Semitic remarks during the hearings: about the existence of “Jewish national crime” in Russia; about B. Mironov's anti-Semitic statements having been merely his “complaints against the current head of the region's administration Tolokonsky and his environment, as well as his personnel policy, which in a country inhabited by over 150 ethnicities creates a certain tension with the national majority and... may be interpreted as an attempt to profiteer in international relations”, and “an author's subjective assessment of certain behavioral features of a given ethnic group”. D. Rogozin together with another deputy, V. Alksnis, announced that they were taking under their personal control the criminal case against the anti-Semitic policeman A. Smirnov.

The following members of the upper and lower houses of the Russian parliament (the Federation Council and the State Duma) said in a survey conducted by the website Regions.ru in April 2007 that they felt it was unnecessary to introduce criminal liability for the Holocaust denial: A. Lyskov, head of the Federation Council's Committee on Legal and Judicial Matters; L. Bindar, member of the Federation Council's Committee on Constitutional Legislation; O. Panteleyev, member of the Federation Council's Committee on FSU Issues; V. Ilyukhin (CPRF), member of the State Duma; A. Kravets (CPRF), deputy head of the Committee on Data Policy; I. Barinov, member

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; and V. Alksnis, member of the Committee on FSU Issues and Relations with Compatriots. They argued that the question of the Holocaust denial or recognition “lies within ethical standards, and therefore criminal liability is not an option”, and put forth the demagogic claim that every nation has suffered from the tragedy, and thus it a liability law ought to be passed for denying the tragedy of all the nations of the USSR, because otherwise the Jews would become “more equal than others”. V. Ilyukhin ventured as far as to say that the suggestion to pass a ban on the Holocaust denial “reeked of a sort of obscurantism”.

Although most anti-Semite deputies did not make it into the Duma after the December 2007 elections, but the new set of lower house deputies still contains no less than seven members professing anti-Semitism and employing a corresponding rhetoric: N. Yezersky, V. Kashin, P. Svechnikov, and S. Sobko from CPRF, all signers of the “500 letter”, demanding to ban all Jewish organizations in Russia; A. Greshnevikov (“A Just Russia”); S. Ivanov, who represents LDPR and patronizes the Nationalist-Socialist Society; V. Ilyukhin (CPRF).

### **Blood libel**

In 2007, anti-Semitic organizations, mostly those on M. Nazarov’s side, insisted on promoting the story of ritual child murders, allegedly performed by Jews. The main emphasis was placed on the so-called Krasnoyarsk case, where Krasnoyarsk Jews were accused of killing several children for ritual purposes in 2005. It can be said that the “ritual version” has become much better-known than it was in 2006, supported in April 2007 by State Duma deputy A. Krutov. In early May and on July 17 the nationalists carried out several public events in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Chita, actively promoting the story of ritual murders committed by Jews, and demanding forces to be sent “first of all against the Chassidic sect” in cases of child murder, “with no scruples as to searching synagogues, matza bakeries, and the homes of their employees”. Articles about ritual murder allegedly committed by Jews were published routinely. The most alarming situation was when accusations of ritual murder spilt out onto the pages of large press, following another child murder in Krasnoyarsk. The thesis was repeated with references to an unnamed source in the authorities by *Novye Izvestiya*, *Russkoe Radio*, *Vek*, *Trud* (in a later article, quoting *Vek*, *Trud* mentioned “a sect of religious maniacs”). Although Jews were never directly pinpointed as the culprit, but the legalization of the term “ritual murder” can in itself become the first step which is then followed by the second: direct accusation. The radical

anti-Semites will most probably keep using this topic in the future, thus attracting new supporters and increasing the level of anti-Semitism in the state. The only way of fighting this sort of fabrications is court action against the distributors of the libel.

### **Anti-Semitism and religious denominations**

The first time that the anti-Semitic opinions certain religious leaders and believers in the Russian Orthodox Church hold were openly displayed at a rather high level was 2007.

In mind here is the activity of bishop Diomid of Chukotka, who published between February-June and in October several appeals, accusing the Patriarch and his milieu of betraying the purity of Orthodoxy. The appeals contained anti-Semitic elements, and the bishop himself was obviously looking to occupy the throne of the head of Orthodox fundamentalists, which has been vacant since the death in 1995 of metropolitan Ioann (Snychev). He went on to suggest that a request for salvation from the “impious Jewish oppression” be included in the prayers, and compiled a special prayer “in memory of those tortured by Jews”, wherein Jews were dubbed “Satan’s minions”.

Diomid was actively supported by radical nationalists, and in 2007 he in turn gave his blessing to the activities of the Russian People’s Union (M. Nazarov – A. Turik), whose main ideological element is anti-Semitism.

Another set of scandalous statements is worth a mention, made by one of the top Muslim hierarchs, co-chairman of the Russian Mufti Council, Nafigulla Ashirov, in the late February-early March, when he compared Israel to a cancerous growth. After scandal broke out, however, N. Ashirov rushed to state that by “cancerous growth” he was referring to Zionism, not to all Israelis. Still, in a later interview for Islam.ru Ashirov said that “the Jewish people itself was suffering from Zionism as well,” while it is the same Zionists who “keep initiating numerous crimes everywhere.”

### **Governmental reaction to displays of anti-Semitism**

As an undoubtedly positive trend one must note the new inclination of courts and the State Persecutor’s office to recognize as extremist certain materials containing an anti-Semitic component, as well as the Rosokhrankultura’s (Russia’s Federal Service for Monitoring Compliance with the Law in Mass Communications and Cultural Monument Protection) work in giving out warnings for publishing such materials.

The number of measures of the law enforcement agencies take against persons who have committed crimes based on anti-Semitism has notably

increased. Moreover, it was not just the culprits of particular offences who were in jeopardy, but also the “ideologists” or instigators thereof. Three publishers of anti-Semitic newspapers were convicted in 2007, two of which were sentenced to actual imprisonment.

30 people were convicted in 2007 for anti-Semitism crimes. 11 of these were sentenced to suspended terms, 5 – to fines, other 5 – to imprisonment for 5 to 10 years, four – to custody of 1 to 5 years, two – to compulsory labor, three – to 1–2 years at colonies-settlements. Other 30 people or so are currently on trial or under examination, including such considerably well-known “stars” of anti-Semitism as ex-minister of press B. Mironov, editor of *Pravoslavnaya Rus* K. Dushenov, and leader of the National-Socialist Society D. Rumyantsev.

The Russian legislation was altered considerably in 2007, when the Penal Code and Code of Administrative Offences received amendments strengthening the punishment for vandalism performed by a group of people or based on ideological, political, national, racial, or religious hatred, possession of nazi paraphernalia or symbols (or similar to it to the point of confusion), fabrication, sales, or purchase for the purpose of selling thereof. These amendments introduced a qualifying feature into several clauses of the Penal Code: “committing a crime on the basis of political, ideological, racial, national, or religious hatred, or hatred towards any given social group”. Also, chapter 20 of the Russian Federation’s Administrative Offences Code (“Administrative offences encroaching on public order and public safety”) was supplemented by clause 20.29, stipulating a separate punishment for “production and distribution of extremist materials in accordance with the published federal list of extremist materials, as well as their production or storage for the purpose of mass distribution”, performed by individuals or bodies corporate.

The law enforcement agencies were also significantly active in their persecution of anti-Semitic literature. A Federal List of Extremist Materials was first formed. Out of the 60 titles added to the list in 2007, a significant number is anti-Semitic literature: publications by the famous pagan ideologist Dobroslav (A. Dobrovolsky) and A. Vostryagov, sentenced in Ulyanovsk under article 282, several articles by A. Nikolaenko from Kemerovo, materials printed in the newspaper “Ya russkiy. Nizhnee Povolzhye” #1–2, 2005, published by A. Mogilev, sentenced as well under article 282, the magazine “Vikhr. National-socialist publication Vyatka #1”, materials from “Izhevskaya diviziya” and S. Putintsev’s “Za Rus!”, papers by radical Islamists, and the film “The Eternal Jew”, created in Nazi Germany.

## UKRAINE

### **Anti-Semitism in politics. Verkhovna Rada elections 2007**

The only right-wing radical political force to take part in the 2007 elections was the ethno-nationalistic All-Ukrainian Union (AU) “Freedom”, presided over by former people’s deputy, currently member of the Lviv regional council, Oleg Tyagnybok. The latter is renowned for his public xenophobic (also anti-Semitic) statements in the past years. In its election program and promotional materials AU Freedom promoted the racist principle of ethnically proportionate representation. Freedom won 0.76% electors’ votes, doubling its result from the elections of 2006, when Tyagnybok’s party won 0.36% votes. Apparently, this improvement in Freedom’s results is due to the absence of competitors in the radical nationalist area, while in 2006 the right-wing Ukrainian National Assembly and Ukraine’s National Movement for Unity, anti-Semitic Ukrainian Conservative Party, and the Unaffiliated Union “The Sun” with its religious-messianic rhetoric all took part in the elections. It is for this reason also that the general volume of anti-Semitic propaganda during the election campaign was much smaller in 2007 than in 2006, when the main lot of anti-Semitic promotional materials was distributed by the Ukrainian Conservative Party, which was affiliated with the International Academy of Personnel Management (IAPM, more on which below). In 2007 the party urged for the premature elections to be boycotted.

Although cases of anti-Semitic propaganda were noticed during the campaign in relation to other political forces, they were unsystematic and related rather to concrete individuals. The only notable case in our view was when Lyudmila Suprun’s electoral bloc, the “Ukrainian Regional Activists” (URA), published and distributed in Kirovograd 20,000 copies of Vladimir Yaroshenko’s brochure “Ukraine in the Plans of Zionism”. This publication can be directly identified as anti-Semitic; it contains many harshly phrased accusations against the Jewish nation. V. Yaroshenko is a subdepartment head at the Kirovograd branch of the IAPM, deputy candidate for the URA bloc. A surprising fact, considering that earlier L. Suprun had criticized the IAPM’s anti-Semitic activities. In this case it is seemingly a matter of cooperation on a purely regional level, explained by some personal relations.

Beside direct “head-on” anti-Semitic propaganda, anti-Semitic motives were used indirectly during the campaign in order to discredit political opponents. For example, various propagandistic (or rather, contra-propagandistic, so-called “black PR”) materials speculated on Yuliya Tymoshenko’s apparently imaginary Jewish descent.

### **Anti-Semitic propaganda. Role of the IAPM. Resistance against anti-Semitic propaganda**

A dramatic decrease in the volume of anti-Semitic propaganda took place between 2007 and 2008, due to changes in the activities of the IAPM and the Ukrainian Conservative Party affiliated with it.

As calculated by Vladimir Mindlin who monitors anti-Semitic propaganda in Ukraine's central press, a total of 542 anti-Semitic publications were registered in 2007. Naturally, the monitoring does not include every publication, as it is impossible to follow the vast amount of Ukrainian newspapers (e.g., regional, party, religious, election-time propagandistic, etc.). The result of the survey therefore should not be seen as the precise number of anti-Semitic articles published in the Ukrainian press in the period at hand. It is nonetheless of great value to us because they can be compared to similar survey results from the past (also produced by V. Mindlin).

Thus, 676 anti-Semitic articles were registered in 2006; 661 in 2005; 379 in 2004. 258 were found (mainly in three newspapers) in 2003, while in 2002, mainly in two publications, there were 179. 2001 saw a hundred-odd such materials, 150 were published in 2000, over 200 in 1999, 260 in 1998, 150 in 1997, up to two hundred in 1996–1994, and up to three hundred in 1993–1992.

How does this dynamic translate?

After a large amount of anti-Semitic publications in the early '90s, fueled by an outburst of national emotions due to gained independence, a general decline in their numbers was evident in the mid-nineties. The slight peak of 1998–1999 can be linked to the parliamentary and presidential election campaigns then taking place. Notably, anti-Semitic materials were mostly published in marginal editions of limited circulation in the late '90s and early 2000s.

2002 saw the beginning of a new stage with a sudden increase in the scale of anti-Semitic propaganda. The colossal growth of its amount in the last five years was caused by the activities of the IAPM. The overwhelming majority of anti-Semitic materials in press, books, public speeches, etc. are related today to the one organization. In fact, this situation makes it impossible to discuss “processes” or “tendencies” and forces researchers to consider instead the artificial nature of Ukrainian anti-Semitism.

Each year between 2002 and 2005 the number of anti-Semitic materials multiplied by 1,5 or doubled, with editions of tens or even hundreds of thousands of copies taking the lead. However, the growth of anti-Semitic publications in 2006 as compared to 2005 is quite insignificant. 2007 saw

the first decrease in the figures since 2002, more detailed analysis showing a continuous decline throughout the year with an especially dramatic recession in the fall of 2007: there were 183 materials published in the first quarter, 137 in the second, 147 in the third during the parliamentary elections, and 75 in the fourth. The leadership of the Academy attempted a conscious albeit not entirely consistent or successful “tuning down” of their own anti-Semitic campaign. The tendency of the volume of propaganda to swiftly diminish went on into 2008 with only 17 anti-Semitic publications registered in the first quarter.

### **Anti-Semitism in the mass conscious. Bogardus Scale**

Sociology has various methods of defining the level of xenophobia in a society. Ukrainian researchers most often use the so-called Bogardus Scale which gives an estimate of the social distance between different population groups. The Scale helps to measure an individual’s attitude towards members of other ethnic groups, more precisely, his/her psychological readiness to accept or reject people of a different ethnic background regardless of their personal qualities and features. The social distance a respondent would rather keep between him-/herself and a given group is calculated by the capacity in which s/he is willing to accept individuals of another ethnicity (as family members, close friends, neighbors, colleagues, etc.). Together, the different responses form an average score for the group on a scale of seven, called the Social Distance Index. The higher the score is, the lower the tolerance of the group in the society.

The most recent such survey was carried out by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) in the end of 2007. According to the data provided by the KIIS, the Social Distance Index as regards Jews in Ukraine has grown from 3.63 in 1994 to 4.6 in 2007. Especially perturbing in this context is the fact that analysis shows young people being increasingly liable to anti-Semitism.

Although the survey data from the KIIS looks rather pessimistic, one must take heed to interpret Bogardus Scale research results correctly. Strictly speaking, these results are problematic to discuss in the terms of tolerance, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism. It is the social distance that the scale defines – and only that.

Despite the dynamic of the recent years, the attitude towards Jews is no worse than that towards many other ethnic groups – in fact, it is much better. Compared to other ethnic groups, Jews are the best off. Jews are at a shorter distance than Romanians or Poles, not to mention the traditional “leaders of

the xenophobia charts” – Roma, Caucasians, South-East Asians, black people. According to a 2007 survey, only the Poles are gaining on the Jews with a Social Distance Index of 4.7.

### **Direct anti-Semitic actions**

**2007**

#### ***Assaults***

In February in Zhitomir three young men with shaven heads attacked Rabbi M. Binshtok. The rabbi was knocked down; his glasses were smashed and confiscated. The victim was forced to seek medical assistance. The community reported in August 2007 that the police had established the culprits, but they had not been arrested.

On March 10 in Zhitomir a young Orthodox Chassidic Jew wearing typical clothes was attacked by hooligans. First, two teenagers approached the Jew and addressed him in Russian, which he did not understand. They then proceeded to beat him up. The Chassid was visiting Zhitomir as a member of a delegation of Israeli students, invited by the local rabbi. The assault was reported from Israel; the Zhitomir Jewish community knows nothing of it and concedes that the information may be unreliable or erroneous.

On July 9 a group of young people attempted an attack on the chief rabbi of Zhitomir, and Central and Western Ukraine, Shlomo Vilgelm, in the courtyard of the Zhitomir synagogue. It was only the active intervention by the synagogue guard and the driver that saved the rabbi from a beating, while the teenagers shouted to the guard “Give us that zhid, we will kill him!” After the rabbi’s departure, the hooligans acted rowdily in the synagogue yard and attempted to break into the premises of a Jewish girls’ dormitory in M. Berdichevskaya street 7. By the time police arrived, the teenagers had escaped.

On August 6 in Zhitomir, Israeli Nokhum Tamarin (director of the Zhitomir department of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine) and his wife Brakha Tamarina (principal of the Zhitomir Chaya Mushka Makhon, a religious educational institution for girls) were assaulted not far from the synagogue. Two short-haired young men attacked the couple from behind, hitting them on the heads and knocking them down. One of the attackers punched Brakha in the face as she was sprawled on the ground. A passer-by called the police and ambulance, both arrived promptly. The ambulance took the victims to the maxillofacial surgery department where they were tended to. The police are in active search of the culprits and tend to associate this event with the previous ones.

On September 27 another attack took place in Zhitomir. Four young men waylaid Israeli citizen Mendel Likhshtein as he walked out of the synagogue after the evening service. The attack was swift and prepared: the anti-Semites sprayed the victim in the face with a tear gas spray and escaped.

On September 29 in Cherkassy, a group of young people attacked three Israeli Chabad members (Rabbi Yosef Raphaelov and two of his assistants, yeshiva students) who had arrived to help the local community hold their Sukkot celebration. The attackers waylaid the victims on their way to the synagogue, knocked them down, and kicked them.

On September 30 in Sevastopol, Rabbi Benyamin Wolf was attacked on his way to the synagogue. As the rabbi was crossing the street, a visitor to Sevastopol from Dnepropetrovsk who stood at the crossroads with some random drinking companions, shouted “Here goes a vampire! You drink blood, don’t you!” and pounced on the Jew. The Sevastopolians tried to hold the attacker back, but he punched the rabbi and ran away. Rabbi Wolf suffered minor bodily harm: his face was hurt and blood had spilled on his clothes. The culprit was quickly found.

### ***Vandalism***

Vandalism is defined within the survey as actions of various nature, performed against gravestones and Jewish organization premises. This includes destruction, arson, and graffiti with anti-Semitic statements and/or Nazi symbols (the latter only taken into account when inscribed directly on a building marked as “Jewish”).

On January 2 unknown people drew a swastika on the facade of the Kharkov community-charity foundation “Beit Dan Jewish Cultural Center” building.

On January 9 unknown people smashed a memorial plaque for victims of the Holocaust on the Elektroterm factory building in Kharkov. Next to the plaque, two swastikas were drawn. That building used to be a synagogue before the war. Having occupied the city in 1941, the Nazis collected in it elderly and ill Jews who were unable to reach Drobitsky Yar, the site of mass shootings, by themselves. Most of the Jews who were herded to the building died there.

On January 15 in Mariupol, anti-Semitic inscriptions were found on the fence and facade of the currently not functioning Choral synagogue.

On February 17 vandals smashed or knocked down 41 gravestones at the Lukyanovsky military cemetery in Kiev, and broke a glass plaque on the Menorah memorial in Babi Yar. A criminal case was instigated under two

articles of the Penal Code of Ukraine (“malicious hooliganism” and “grave profanation”). The suspects, apprehended on February 20, were 14-year-old Yaroslav Gavrish, a ninth-grader at the 139 school, and 16-year-old Denis Maykov, a student at the Professional-Technical School of Water Transport. The young people claimed they did this to the cemetery because “there were no crosses on the gravestones, which means those were zhids laying there”. The young anti-Semites referred to the Menorah as “the Jewish cactus”.

On February 18, unknown vandals stenciled swastikas onto 302 gravestones at the Third Jewish Cemetery in Odessa. At the same time, the Doctor Leon Pinsker memorial board downtown and the local memorial to the victims of Nazism were profaned. Under the memorial, the anti-Semites wrote “Happy Holocaust”. Three suspects were apprehended on March 12: two unemployed 25-year-olds and a 20-year-old student at one of Odessa’s professional-technical schools. They claimed they had “just wanted to see how the society would react”. The vandals were sentenced by Odessa’s Malinovsky Court on August 10. All three defendants were found guilty of desecration of graves. The court ruled out the accusation of “rousing national hatred”. Two of the vandals were sentenced to two years of imprisonment; the third received the same sentence suspended for a year. Moreover, the felons were obligated to pay the costs of the examination, amounting to 15,169 hryvnias.

On March 7, acts of vandalism were reported from two cities at once: Berdichev (Zhitomir oblast) and Alexandria (Kirovograd oblast). On Alexandria’s memorial to victims of the Holocaust a swastika, “URA” (Ukraine’s Rebel Army), and SS (as a doubled sig rune) were all painted in black.

On March 20, an act of vandalism was reported from Kalusha (Ivano-Frankovsk oblast). Unknown vandals drew a swastika and damaged the memorial to victims of the Holocaust at the Jewish cemetery. In addition, a marble slab was stolen, the fence around the memorial damaged.

On April 12, unknown intruders vandalized the old Jewish cemetery of Chernovtsy. Most of the damaged gravestones (about 70) were dropped from their places, three were smashed.

On April 27 in Khmelnytsky, a memorial on the site of the common grave of 8,000 Jews killed by Nazis during WWII was damaged. Unknown vandals broke off the memorial plaque that was on the monument and smashed it.

On May 3 unknown vandals threw black paint onto the Dnepropetrovsk synagogue.

In Kharkov in May, someone set fire to the exhibition the Jewish Agency (Sochnut) organized in honor of Israel’s Independence Day and Jerusalem

Day. The organizers did not remove the burned exhibits, leaving them for the numerous visitors to see.

On May 23 an act of vandalism was reported from the Jewish cemetery of Chernigov. Nineteen gravestones were shattered and knocked down. A suspect was arrested. The authorities deny the ideological nature of the crime, the criminal case having been instituted under article 297 of the Penal Code of Ukraine (“violation of graves”).

On August 17, during the afternoon prayer of Mincha, a young man burst into the old synagogue of Zhitomir, broke a window, and ran back out. The synagogue gabbay attempted to run the hooligan down, but he escaped. The police arrived promptly, but the anti-Semite could not be apprehended forthwith.

On September 10, it became known that a wall of the Alef Jewish school in Zaporozhye, belonging to the ORT system, was inscribed with anti-Semitic slogans such as “Death to the zhids!” and “Zhids, clear off!”.

Alexandria’s memorial to victims of the Holocaust, which had been previously vandalized this year, was defiled on September 12. Some anti-Semites drew swastikas on it and wrote “Death to the zhids!” The suspected criminal, a 16-year-old professional-technical school student, was reported to have been apprehended on October 1.

On October 6, the house of Uzhgorod’s rabbi, Chabad delegate Menakhem Mendel Taykhman, was set on fire. The incident took place during the holiday of Simkhat Tora, when the rabbi was in Mukachevo together with his wife. The criminals entered the rabbi’s home, broke into his safe, stole a large amount of cash and some documents, and finally set fire to the premises in three spots. The house did not burn to the ground due entirely to a fortunate coincidence: the felons opened the burners of the gas stove, but the main gas tap was closed; without oxygen supply, the fire smoldered for almost 24 hours. There are no grounds to suspect an ideological basis to this crime. Despite contradictory information arriving from the authorities, it seems that this was most likely a common burglary, with the arson serving to cover the traces of the crime. The incident does not go towards the final statistic figures, and is only brought here because of the wide public response it received.

On October 14, some young men broke the windows of the Kiev Brodsky Central Synagogue. Witnesses claim these men were participants of the nationalistic demonstration that took place in downtown Kiev that day. The anti-Semites were driven off by the building guards.

On October 31, fire was set to the senior students’ building of the Simkha Jewish school in Kiev’s Dneprovsky district, 22b General Vatutin Ave. Most of

the first floor burned out, but the students were on vacation, so nobody was injured. An 11-year-old boy was apprehended as suspect, the investigators suggesting that the arson was an act of hooliganism. Shortly before the arson, the building next door to the school was inscribed with “Death to the zhids”. A week before the incident, a rock wrapped in a note of similar content was thrown through the school’s window.

On November 24, an act of vandalism at Zhitomir’s Jewish cemetery was reported. Some hooligans forced the grate door and entered the house (burial vault) of the tzaddik Rabbi Aaron of Zhitomir, one of the students of Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidim. The house was found wrecked, offensive inscriptions, a swastika, and traces of fire discovered on its walls. The righteous man’s burial vault has been attacked before, as it is remote from the central part of the cemetery and the keepers’ watch. According to the Jewish News Agency, the local Jewish community does not consider this act of vandalism to be distinctly anti-Semitic, as such crimes have been committed before at other, non-Jewish, cemeteries. The community says the vandals were probably local drug addicts or homeless people. The Security Service of Ukraine agrees, stating later that “the hooligans” have been found, and that “this was not a case of anti-Semitism.” This incident does not go towards the final statistic figures either.

On December 8 in Cherkassy, unknown vandals damaged the ritual nine-stick candelabrum (hanukkiah), erected at the central city square during the holiday of Hanukkah. After the hanukkiah was erected, the square and its surroundings were under constant police watch, but the anti-Semites attacked between shifts. They broke one of the shades, damaged the “Happy Hanukkah” banner, and bent the projector that was illuminating it. The police’s return scared the anti-Semites off. After the incident, a twenty-four-hour police post was established next to the hanukkiah.

## **2008**

### ***Assaults***

On January 24, at night, four strangers beat up Rabbi Dov-Ber Baytman, a teacher at the Shiurei Torah educational center, in downtown Dnepropetrovsk, next to the Golden Rose central synagogue. They yelled out anti-Semitic slogans during the assault.

On June 10 in Odessa Israeli Avi Chazzan suffered an assault. He was returning from a pilgrimage to Uman, where the grave of Rabbi Nakhman from Bratslav, one of the most revered Chassidic teachers, is situated. Wearing the recognizable clothes of a religious Jew, he hailed a private car late at night,

joined soon by two young men. A. Chazzan was taken out of town and beaten up. He was not robbed and his private possessions remained intact except for a chain with a Star of David, which was torn off his neck. The Israeli left Ukraine the next morning without filing a report with the police.

### ***Vandalism***

On the night of January 26, a Ukrainian citizen was apprehended by Security Service officers in Kiev as he attempted to make anti-Semitic inscriptions on a synagogue in Podol. The SSU press-center reports that the criminal tried to physically resist arrest. The felony was qualified under article 296 of the Penal Code of Ukraine (“hooliganism”).

On March 4 an act of vandalism at the Jewish cemetery of Berdichev was reported. Someone broke a fence, drew Nazi symbols on the walls of the mausoleum of Chassidic tzaddik Rabbi Levy Yitzchak, and broke its windows. There were also Nazi symbols painted on gravestones next to the vault. In June, a local 21-year-old was sentenced for this crime by the City Court of Berdichev. He was found guilty under article 297 of the Penal Code of Ukraine (“violation of graves”), and sentenced to 1.5 years of imprisonment with a one-year probationary period.

On the night of April 16 in Zhitomir, unknown vandals wrecked and set fire to the burial vault of the famous tzaddik Rabbi Aaron of Zhitomir, one of the closest students of Rabbi Israel Ben Eliezer (Baal Shem Tov), the founder of Chassidism. The vandals drew Satanist symbols on the walls (a reverse cross, three sixes, a pentagram), wrote Satanist slogans (“Satan is come”, “Dark Angel”), and finally set fire to the mausoleum. The vault was severely damaged. In the course of investigations by the SSU together with the criminal police’s delinquency department, three suspects have been found: two seventh-graders and a ninth-grader. According to the authorities, the children lit a campfire next to the burial vault in order to warm themselves, and when the wind caught the flames and threw them onto the vault’s wooden roof, they took fright of the fire and ran away. The SSU reports that the children had no intent of arson.

On April 24 an act of vandalism at the Jewish cemetery in Bolgrad (Odessa oblast) was reported. Unknown criminals knocked down and broke 11 gravestones.

### ***Conclusions***

An attempt to draw conclusions on the dynamic of anti-Semitism in 2007–2008 seems to lead to the following theses:

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– A definite decrease in the amount of anti-Semitic publications was recorded during the period in question;

– The amount of violent crimes remains roughly equal to that of 2005-2006, and some indicators (such as the level of cruelty and use of weapons by the attackers) even suggest a decrease in the tension in this area; however, with some 5-6 incidents per year, the factor of chance is too strong to speak of any tendencies;

– A certain increase has been recorded in the amount of vandalism against Jewish institution buildings, memorials, and gravestones;

– According to sociological polls, the social distance towards Jews keeps growing, as it has been since the early '90s.

A dramatic increase in the government's effort against anti-Semitism is a significant outcome of the period in question: anti-Semitic vandalism became grounds for imprisonment etc.

**2008 REPORT**  
**ON ANTI-SEMITISM IN AUSTRALIA**  
(COVERING THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2007 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2008)

*By Jeremy Jones AM\**

**Overview**

In Australia in 2008, to accuse any person or organisation of anti-Semitism is to allege that their behaviour is antisocial and unacceptable. No one with aspirations to public credibility admits to holding anti-Semitic views or to associating with openly anti-Semitic organisations. While individuals and organisations associated with the political left who promote extreme anti-Israeli racism, which sometimes included offensive and gratuitous anti-Jewish imagery, are keen to assert that they are not anti-Semitic, even some far-right and neo-Nazi groups publicly profess to be “anti-Zionist” rather than anti-Jewish, although the material they distribute can give the lie to any such distinction.

In the Australian media, during the year in review, commentators and contributors of letters (and in other forms of public commentary) occasionally, but rarely, crossed the line between political commentary and anti-Jewish slander in discussions of the alleged strength of “Jewish lobbies” in both the USA and Australia, as well as in some discussions of Israel. Notably, this took place less often in the period in review than in any of the previous eight reporting periods. Anti-Jewish rhetoric was also invoked in other discussions such as Australia’s anti-terrorism laws and on Australian Jewish support for victims of racism. Particular concern, in the period in review, has been expressed at the negative impact of material from a variety of overseas sources which has as its thesis an eternal enmity of Muslims towards Jews.

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The period in review included the 2007 Federal Election, which passed without any notable change in the prevalence of anti-Semitic acts. Despite efforts by anti-Jewish groups and individuals, matters of specific concern to Australian Jewry, such as community security and funding support for Jewish education, were discussed publicly in a manner which was generally free of prejudice. Similarly, public discussion on the extradition request by Hungary to Australia for alleged Nazi War Criminal Charles Zentai, the Federal Court contempt hearing process under the Racial Hatred Act concerning Fredrick Toben and the Australian Parliament's motion congratulating Israel on its 60 anniversary, was essentially reasoned and reasonable, despite efforts by some organised political and other anti-Israel groups, as well as a small number of media commentators.

There was a concern that the staging of a re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross, during the 2008 Papal visit to Sydney, would reinforce or encourage anti-Jewish stereotypes and prejudice, but there were efforts made by the Catholic Church and the Jewish community to minimise this potential harm, apparently successfully.

Between 1 October 2007 and 30 September 2008, the database assembled and maintained by the author of this report since 1989 included 652 reports of anti-Jewish violence, vandalism, harassment and intimidation, the highest tally ever recorded and close to twice the average of the previous 18 years. Anti-Jewish propaganda in fringe publications and from extremist organisations remained an ongoing concern. Conspiracy theories abounded on the internet and these included a disturbing proportion which were overtly or implicitly anti-Semitic.

### **Racism in Australia and anti-Semitism**

The Australian Jewish community has been an integral part of Australia's population since the first days of European settlement. While there have been incidents of anti-Jewish activity occurring throughout the different periods of the development of modern Australia, opposition to anti-Semitism has also been present and, perhaps more importantly, the question of the place of Jews within Australian society has generally not been an issue which has excited the Australian population. However, an unacceptably high number of Australian Jews can provide evidence of instances of discrimination, harassment and racial defamation.

Some anti-Jewish behaviour has found apologists who portray it as culturally innate, simple ignorance, a legitimate reaction to the behaviour of

Jews themselves or as the poor expression of otherwise legitimate views. In recent years, with increasing anti-Semitism emanating from left-wing sources there has been an additional issue of figures close to the political and social mainstream rationalising or justifying anti-Semitism by misrepresenting it as legitimate political expression. In a recurring pattern, the false charge that all, or most, critics of any Israeli policy or action is called anti-Semitic, is levelled.

While there is strong anecdotal evidence that there exists in Australia an under-current of racism, it is difficult to objectively assess the place of anti-Semitism in Australian racism. No comprehensive statistics exists on the subject of general racist violence, vilification, harassment and intimidation, which would supplement or give context to the data-collection and analysis of the Jewish community. While some clues as to the level of concern at racism can be discerned from indicators such as the volume of complaints to bodies – the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, the Australian Press Council, the Australian Broadcasting Authority and State-based anti-discrimination boards and the voluntary nature of the complaints system and many other factors result in the need to treat many such statistics with caution.

### **Common themes in anti-Jewish rhetoric**

Sources of anti-Jewish stereotyping and vilification are quite diverse and it would be misleading to portray anti-Semitic organisation and individuals as acting in concert. Although some of the anti-Semitic organisations will present a grab-bag of stereotypes to rationalise their prejudice, it is generally possible to identify a central theme in organised anti-Jewish campaigns. Some individuals and organisations disseminating anti-Semitic propaganda seek to attribute particular characteristics, motives or agendas to Jewish Australians, portraying them as not only different but threatening to the well-being of Australian society. They identify behaviour which the intended audience will find abhorrent and attribute it to Jews, undermining the legitimacy of participation of Jews in Australian life. Propagation of anti-Jewish stereotypes, even when meant to be humorous, can sustain the agendas of malicious anti-Semites. The most common theme in contemporary Australian anti-Semitic rhetoric is that Jews in Australia and/or internationally, individually and/or collaboratively, exercise disproportionate power and influence against the interests of non-Jews.

Anti-Jewish claims in Australia traditionally draw on a number of strands of rhetoric. For example, Holocaust Denial is often framed to include

charges of anti-Christian motivation, almost supernatural Jewish power and global conspiracy. It is unfortunately common for extremists and anti-Semites in Australia to use the experiences of Jews as victims of Genocide, murder and assault as a means to insult Jewish people and incite or justify hatred of them. The most extreme example is the historically and logically inappropriate designation of language and symbols associated with the Nazi genocide to Jewish people, such as accusing Jews of being “Nazi-like”, committing “Holocausts” and/or Genocide, or supporting “concentration camps”.

A thread common to a number of types of prejudice and vilification which are specific to Jews is the depiction of Jews as representing an existential threat to non-Jews and who have enormous power and drive to achieve their aim, generally presented as “world domination”. Stereotypes of Jews, most often as stingy or ostentatiously wealthy, reinforce prejudices which facilitate more malicious vilification. A result of behaviour of this type can be the encouragement, or rationalisation of, abuse, harassment and more serious vilification.

Common to many variations of anti-Semitism identified in Australia in the period in review is the assertion of belief in the desire and ability of Australian Jews to dictate public policy in a way which distorts the workings of society in the interests of the local Jewish community or, occasionally, international interests. Australian Jews are blamed by extremist organisations and their followers for contentious Federal and State policies on social matters, financial programs and the weakening of establishment institutions. The high profile of a number of individual Jewish Australians, particularly in the business community, is used by those who seek to further this particular anti-Jewish propaganda line as evidence of Jewish power. Government decisions which have accorded with public positions adopted by the Jewish community are also presented as evidence of Jewish control of the levers of political power. A parallel myth which appears on a semi-regular basis in the mainstream media is that the US Government is either controlled by or in thrall to the “Jewish lobby”. The way in which this is expressed not only reflects anti-Jewish prejudice but implicates Jewish Australians in the control of international interests and indirectly of Australia, given the importance of the US in world affairs.

The theme of an international Jewish conspiracy is central to the world view of each of the overtly anti-Semitic organisations. Extreme elements within some migrant communities also promote this mythology as a means of explaining circumstances in their countries of birth. One of the sources anti-Semitic organisations use to support this myth is The Protocols of the

Learned Elders of Zion, which incredibly is taken seriously by most extremist groups and advertised in many anti-Semitic, extreme right-wing and New Age publications. Alleged Jewish power is depicted as a powerful force behind globalism in some circles, with many others depicting Jews as malevolent forces controlling Western governments.

A subset of the above is the promotion of the claim that there was neither a Nazi Genocide of Jews nor an attempt at one. The thesis presented, either explicitly or implicitly, is that Jews, sometimes with the help of sympathisers and sycophants, use popular belief in the Nazi Holocaust as a means of extorting sympathy, money and political gain. At present it is fair to say that Holocaust Denial is generally understood, in Australia, to be anti-Semitic. In the judgements in the Federal Court cases, *Jones v Toben* and *Jones v Bible Believers* it was established that it can be racist as defined in Australian law. Nevertheless, Holocaust deniers have been establishing their own historiography and have shown an ability to take advantage of media opportunities and modern communication techniques to harass and intimidate Jews as well as attempting to mislead the Australian public.

In 1982, Conor Cruise O'Brien, searching for a term to describe the slur that Israel, representing the heirs of the victims of Nazism, was behaving in a "Nazi" manner, coined the term "anti-Jewism". This slur has been directed at Israel and Australian Jews with a disturbing frequency during the past four years, with a number of fringe far Left organisations promoting this analogy as policy. When Jews are called Nazis it not only renders the unique crimes of Hitler's regime common-place, but also uses Jews' past suffering as a means of abuse. During recent periods of high tension in the Middle East, the expression of this view was increasingly tolerated, and even promoted, by sections of the mainstream media.

The slur has currency particularly in far left circles, with some members of left-wing groups alleging that civilians who are the tragic victims of conflicts involving Israel are victims of a Nazi-like genocide and some right-wingers accusing Jews who support legal recourse for victims of racism with Nazis who murdered political opponents. It has also been used increasingly by Arab and Muslim critics of Israel in Australia. This slander is sometimes conscious anti-Semitism, sometimes thoughtless polemic and sometimes confused rhetoric, but regardless of its motivation it is generally recognised, after consideration, as anti-Semitism.

In a community, such as that in contemporary Australia, which includes substantial numbers of Holocaust survivors and people who lost many family members in the Nazi Genocide, the legitimate concern that Nazism

is understood for what it was is complemented by sensitivity to abuse of language. Sloppy, inappropriate invocation of terminology, including “Nazi” and “Holocaust”, is not necessarily the result of anti-Semitic intent, but does denigrate the reality of Genocide, persecution and suffering. Political analysts in Australia have observed the way in which consistent, inaccurate analogies involving Holocaust terminology reduce the true historic event in a way which can be summarised as “if everything is a Holocaust, then the Holocaust has no special significance.” This phenomenon is disturbing, and can have the result of furthering anti-Semitic agendas, even if Jews were not part of the thinking of those who are part of it.

Another form of Holocaust denigration is the demand that Jews stop acting as if the experiences under Nazism have any contemporary relevance and the call for individuals and the community to “get over it.” This sentiment is often voiced by that section of the extreme right which accepts that there was a Holocaust, as well as by Holocaust Deniers who will argue that the suffering was not even particularly severe. In the recent period, it has been used increasingly by anti-Israel activists who believe that the fact of the Nazi Genocide and sympathy for those who were its actual and intended victims is the most important factor in support for the existence of Israel.

References to Judaism as a religion which leads its adherents to behave in a manner which, by virtue of being un-Christian, is judged to be not in accord with Australian social values, has been invoked by individuals, and organisations, who have differed with Jewish community organisations on matters of public policy. The stereotyping of Judaism as being obsessed with the pursuit of vengeance (as against justice) in some public commentary on the issue of the challenge posed to Australian society by revelations that some Nazi War Criminals held Australian citizenship, for example, misrepresented Christianity and Judaism to further a political agenda.

Beyond the concept of Judaism as un-Christian is the theme of Judaism as anti-Christian, which takes a part in the conspiracy theories of a number of extremist organisations which portray Jews as religious, racial or political opponents of Christianity. The Talmud is a subject for distortion and misrepresentation by these groups and others aiming to vilify Jews, and in the rhetoric of the far right symbolises a code of living implacably opposed to “Christian justice”. In publications of some extreme right-wing organisations, Jews are described as “Esau” and/or the “spawn of Satan”, in each case defining Jews as Christians’ existential enemies.

While Australian Christianity is not, by and large, susceptible to the promotion or endorsement of these mythologies, it is disturbing that men and

women educated in Christian traditions are addressed by vilifiers of Judaism in terms tailored to their perceived understanding of Jews and Judaism. It is also disturbing that debate still rages in a number of mainstream churches as to the legitimacy of Judaism in the Christian era.

Out-dated and puerile as the stereotype of Jews as unethical and stingy may appear to be, it has had remarkable resilience in the repertoire of a number of humorists, including some within the mainstream media. Anti-Jewish humour in social contexts in contemporary Australia also often revolves around such stereotypes, occasionally even receiving broadcast on radio. The racist and anti-Semitic sub-culture which exists in the gutters of Australian society not only benefits from such negative portrayals of Jewish Australians but incorporates such imagery into propaganda designed to depict Jews as fundamentally undeserving of a role in Australian life. At various times over the past sixty years, when there has been anecdotal evidence that racism against any segment of Australian society is increasing there has been a concurrent increase in reports of crude and unthinking anti-Semitic comments made in the workplace, educational institutions and in public places towards individuals who were or were believed to be Jewish. This type of abuse is indistinguishable from that aimed at other minority groups such as Indigenous Australians, Asians and Muslims. There is nothing to suggest that this type of offensive and insulting behaviour represented any particular targeting of, or specific threat to, the Jewish community. It does support the thesis that, in the mind of the Australian bigot, being Jewish is sufficient to be thought of as “the other”.

### **Incidents of violence, vandalism, harassment and intimidation**

During the twelve months ending September 30, 2008, 652 reports were recorded of incidents defined by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission as “racist violence” against Jewish Australians. These incidents included physical assault, vandalism – including through arson attacks – threatening telephone calls, hate mail, graffiti, leaflets, posters and abusive and intimidatory electronic mail. This exceeded by 2% the previous highest total, recorded in the year ending September 30, 2007. It was more than twice the previous average annual total.

The total for reports of all types was a fraction below twice the previous average. Many of the reports were of threats, rather than physical attacks on person or property, but the reports reveal that hundreds of Jewish individuals and organisations were targeted, some repeatedly, by persons seeking to intimidate or harass them.

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Incidents of assault, arson attacks, face-to-face harassment and vandalism which are broadly defined as “attacks” were recorded at the second highest rate on record set in the previous 12 month period. The total was more than double the previous average. Threats, conveyed through the telephone, mail, leaflets, posters or e-mail, were recorded at a rate just under twice the previous average and at the highest level in six years.

The combined number of incidents involving physical assault, property damage and direct, face-to-face harassment was almost three times the previous average. Amongst the most disturbing incidents of assault and property vandalism (not including graffiti) reported were incidents of assault in Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, rocks, bottles and eggs thrown at congregants leaving synagogues in Sydney and Melbourne, an Orthodox Jew was taunted and had his hat stolen while walking down main road in Sydney’s eastern suburbs, a Jewish day school student abused, assaulted by students from another school while on school excursion in Sydney, a rabbi in Queensland’s Gold Coast was verbally abused, then physically assaulted, by an unknown male assailant a shopfront of Jewish food outlet in Melbourne smashed in rock attack.

The incidents of harassment which did not include assault were reported at a rate more than three times the previous average and at the second highest volume recorded. Most of these incidents were of motorists and passengers yelling abuse at people walking to or from synagogue or of students at Jewish schools who were wearing school uniform.

During the period in review incidents of graffiti were reported at the second lowest level in eight years and at a rate eighty percent of the average for all years. There is a particular concern when graffiti is daubed on synagogues and other Jewish communal institutions, as this not only has the potential to offend and intimidate a large number of people but also as it could represent desecration of religious sites.

Amongst the graffiti incidents in the past year were: a large swastika daubed in Melbourne suburb with substantial Jewish population; graffiti “Kill all Jews” and “Jews are cunts” in public library in Sydney’s eastern suburbs; swastikas daubed on synagogue in Melbourne; swastikas daubed on kosher restaurant in Melbourne; graffiti “Jewish Premises” daubed on street in Perth in front of house with a Mezuzah; a swastika daubed on synagogue in Sydney’s eastern suburbs; two large swastikas were daubed on a billboard in Perth advertising Jewish person’s professional services; graffiti on wall of synagogue in Melbourne “Jews suck” with graphic picture.

Reports of threats conveyed to the Jewish community through telephone calls or through the mail were received at a rate only thirty percent of the average over the previous eighteen years. Telephone calls, which often contained extreme anti-Semitic abuse, were recorded at the lowest rate in nineteen years. Incidents of hate mail were recorded at the third lowest rate in nineteen years, but abusive and threatening mail continued to be received at private homes and by Jewish institutions. There are some letter writers who have mailed the same or similar anti-Semitic letters to different recipients over a long period of time, whose activities are supplemented by a number of people who write letters often or on specific issues.

The ability of a person to remain anonymous and to send messages cheaply has made email the favoured means of communicating hate messages by Australian anti-Semites. During the period in review over sixty percent of all incidents reported were emails. There is no discernible difference in the themes contained in email messages to those sent through the postal service or communicated by telephone. The receipt of abusive, threatening and other anti-Semitic email sent to individuals and communal offices was reported at a rate of more than seven times a week in the year in review. The total during this reporting period was more than four times the average and forty percent greater than the previous worst year.

In addition to the modes of harassment and intimidation identified above, the Jewish community receives reports on a regular basis of the receipt of text messages, leaflets and other material placed in private letterboxes by hand, the sighting of posters with anti-Jewish themes, stickers on buildings and telegraph poles and other similar forms of dissemination of anti-Jewish propaganda. Reports of material in these categories were received in the twelve months in review at sixty percent of the average.

### **Anti-Semitism in the media and the community**

Over the past five years, there has been strong, bipartisan political opposition to anti-Semitism. The 2007 Federal election was notable for a lack of impact, or even visibility, of extremist political groups. Over the past decade, representatives of the major parties have vigorously exposed any electoral preferencing, relationship or contact between their opponents and political extremists, and there is now an accepted, if informal, protocol which has known extremists placed below other candidates in voter advisory literature. However, an incident of anti-Semitism came to light in the wake of the defeat of the Liberal/National Party coalition government, with the

Liberal Party of Victoria's state campaign manager being forced to resign after revelations she had referred, by e-mail, to a fellow Liberal as a "greedy fucking Jew".

The small political party, One Nation, was the exception to the broad consensus against anti-Semitism and a cause of on-going concern. For example, a branch newsletter claimed "Khazar Jews... currently control the world's finances and perpetuate the Islamic invasion to cause disruption to feed their greedy coffers". It is significant to note that the open anti-Semitism coincided with One Nation's dramatic electoral demise.

However, anecdotal evidence continued to emerge to the effect that anti-Jewish views and opinions being voiced in situations which suggest that there has been a weakening of social and cultural sanctions against overt racism. A study of the situation in a number of schools revealed instances of anti-Jewish prejudice, with both far-right and religious sources. A number of reports were received of anti-Jewish abuse on sporting fields. On internet forums linked to mainstream commercial enterprises, anti-Semitic stereotyping and insults are far too common. On-line communities, Facebook and You-Tube in particular, have been the venues of crude and intense anti-Jewish prejudice being expressed openly and unashamedly. While the sum total of reports of each and all such behaviour is not sufficient to suggest that it is rampant, it is nevertheless cause for genuine concern.

In Australian society, a major factor in limiting the growth of racism in general can be unambiguous opposition to it from the mainstream media. It is therefore a matter of concern to all Australians who value a tolerant and democratic society when sections of the mass media disregard this fact. It should be emphasised that these cases were exceptions to the rule, and that in the overwhelming majority of cases the media outlet involved was far more likely to report fairly, challenge racism and sub-edit offending pieces rather than give open slather to anti-Semitism. Given the way in which Australian racists have behaved over a long period, there is considerable evidence to support the contention that when they believe their activities are tolerated or even rationalised and encouraged by sources of authority, which can include the mainstream media, they seem far more likely to act on any anti-Semitism they already harbour. This is particularly the case when anti-Semitic views are broadcast on the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission), as in the minds of racists this signifies that bigotry has received government imprimatur.

Coverage of issues relating to the Australian Jewish community by the mainstream media is extensive and out of all proportion to the community's size or of its percentage of the Australian population. On a range of issues,

sections of the mainstream media seek the input and opinions of the Australian Jewish community and coverage on matters of direct concern to Jews is a regular feature in both foreign and domestic affairs coverage. The coverage is generally responsible and does not unduly play on the “Jewishness” of individuals or of the issues.

On some subjects, particularly relating to issues resulting from the Nazi Holocaust, the media has been generally sympathetic to the community, while there is less sympathy when it comes to coverage of Israel and the Middle East and where some commentators can be identified who use different criteria for judging Israel than they do for any other state due to Israel’s Jewish population. Matters which have some complexity are sometimes simplified by use of stereotypes or racist imagery, giving genuine reason for concern at the way inappropriate analogies are used when discussing matters involving the Jewish community, Israel or individual Jewish people. There has also been occasional comment within the mainstream media which has given cause for concern. This situation is compounded by the ability of some individuals and organisations to have letters published and talkback calls aired which foment prejudice. A third concern is lapses in journalistic standards which allow anti-Semitic comments to be published and broadcast, resulting more from a lack of sensitivity than anti-Jewish intent. Anti-Israel documentaries and news reports have been used by racist organisations and individuals to demonstrate to their followers and potential supporters that anti-Jewish activity had some level of public endorsement.

Israel receives extensive but generally superficial coverage in the Australian mass media. The propaganda ploy of presenting those responsible for the introduction of violence into a situation where peaceful negotiations were proceeding, as if they were the victims of some unprovoked brutality, was carried in a number of sections of the Australian media, sometimes with enthusiasm and often without reasoned analysis. Those who have broad anti-Semitic agendas have found this situation a useful pretext for voicing their anti-Jewish prejudices and incitements. Others who may in different circumstances be opposed to racism sometimes added their voices and contributed opinions, which have included the attribution of racial characteristics to Jews.

Attempts to delegitimise Israel and Zionism, conducted by public spokespersons for the Palestinians, included extreme allegations against Israel and Judaism. In addition, supporters of the tyranny in Iraq or the theological fascists in Iran used whatever opportunities were presented to them to level charges, in extreme language, against Israel, Zionism and, on occasion, Jewry. For example, after being quoted by a number of journalists

as having said the anti-Semitic blood libel was a legitimate part of the Middle East debate, Roland Jabbour of the Australian Arabic Council claimed in August 2008 that “The false charge of anti-Semitism by some is used to silence and blackmail those to dare to criticize the Zionist’ self-righteous and lawless child, the state of Israel. It is designed to frighten those who dare to engage in and encourage honest debate about these important matters – something we must do as a society in the interest of justice and peace. Israel continues its aggression while claiming self-defense: a right usually reserved for the victims of aggression – and the same right Israel denies its own victims.”

Although the many small groups which comprise the Australian far-left often make declarations critical of racism in all its forms, demonisation of Israel is a common thread and the extremes of language used to condemn Zionism and Israel can only promote a mythology on Jewish “internationalism”, powerful and evil, almost indistinguishable from the far right. It should be noted that most of the groups in this sector are ambiguous, if not internally contradictory, on questions of Jews and of Middle East politics, but the fact that material was published promoting the concept of “Zionism” as an “international conspiracy” and of Jews as Nazis warrants criticism.

For a number of years, extreme anti-Israel propaganda, including many pieces disputing Israel’s right to exist and blaming “Zionists” for many world problems, have been produced by left-wing groups, who have sometimes aligned themselves with anti-progressive, racist groups to further anti-Israel agendas. A number of commentators have begun to note the reality of anti-Semitism in left-wing circles, a reality denied by many self-described left-wingers for many years. Within what is broadly defined as the left, a number of small political groups which describe themselves as communist, socialist or anarchist have been part of the Australian political landscape for many years. Although the groups often appear indistinguishable to outsiders, their differences and rivalries are often circulated with passion. Amongst a number of the groups, evidence of ideological purity is very important, with accusations of pragmatism levelled at opponents as a means of denigrating their activities. The groups in this part of the political spectrum share with the far-right a vigorous opposition to the “establishment” and what they perceive to be those with power. Anti-Americanism and contempt for liberal democracies is marked by conspiracy theories and by simplistic divisions of political forces into friends and enemies. Although there are some differences in the approach to Israel taken by these groups, the general attitude is that Israel is clearly in the camp of their enemies and is therefore a fair target for abuse, delegitimation and defamation.

During the period in review, the Senate of Australia commenced an inquiry into Academic Freedom. One result was that a number of Jewish students began to tell of some negative and hostile experiences on campus. These included the introduction into classrooms of extraneous and tendentious material critical of the Jewish community of Australia and/or Israel, disparaging remarks regarding names of students thought to indicate they were Jewish, teaching on Israel which distorted Jewish history and beliefs, blogs maintained by academics which promoted and hosted extreme anti-Israel and often anti-Jewish material and a number of other issues. In most cases, the individuals responsible for creating the atmosphere in which Jewish student were made to feel uncomfortable and victims of discrimination were oriented towards the political left, with a minority from Muslim or Arab backgrounds. Despite anti-racist policies in place on most campuses, there have also been reports over the recent period of the perpetrators of overt anti-Semitic acts not facing any negative consequences for their activities.

Australia's Arabic-speaking community is large and vibrant. Jews are not a major concern or pre-occupation for this community, but when Jewish matters are discussed it can give rise to concerns, particularly when discussion of the Middle East departs from vigorous political debate and enters the realm of religious and racial stereotyping. Concerns are at the availability at Islamic bookstores of overt anti-Semitic and other extremist literature and videos, the propagation of anti-Jewish myths by a number of imams and religious teachers, the association between Australian Muslims and individuals and groups in other countries known to be actively anti-Jewish, as well as the circulation of anti-Jewish propaganda within the Muslim population in Australia. While books promoting terrorism in an overt manner were subject to official censorship, anti-Jewish material can only be dealt with under the various State and territory anti-racism legislation and these laws are generally not well-framed to deal with this type of situation. Despite public criticism, including some from prominent Islamic groups, some Muslim bookshops continue to stock material such as copies of *The Protocols of Zion*. A paper delivered at the Australian Association of Jewish Studies Conference (February 2008) claimed many "modern Muslim Australian youth" held strong anti-Semitic views, with the swastika seen as a reminder of "good things", belief in Jewish control of Australian government and echoing of Hezbollah anti-Jewish chants being typical. The discussions on Islamic and Arabic internet forums and the content of postings to newsgroups testify to a vigorous anti-Jewish sub-culture.

Over a number of years, there has been a cross-pollination of ideology and material between some sections of the Australian Muslim community and the extreme right wing political organisations. Racist groups such as the Australian League of Rights have hosted speakers such as Keysar Trad of the Islamic Friendship Association, due to the perception that Jews and/or Israel is a common, serious enemy. In 2007, The Sydney Forum, arguably the most significant annual gathering of the Australian far right, featured as a speaker anti-Israel, left-wing polemicist Rihab Charida, who spoke in the company of a number of anti-multicultural extreme right wingers, on the subject of Middle East politics.

It must be emphasised that the Jewish and Islamic communities in Australia enjoy a generally positive relationship and there is little evidence that anti-Jewish sentiment is widespread. At the public, leadership level, Muslim and Jewish Australians regularly meet, and promote understanding and tolerance. Joint declarations supplement stand-alone condemnations of racism and discrimination.

The way in which Church representatives discuss Israel and Middle East issues from time to time is a cause of considerable concern. The rhetoric emanating from Sabeel in Jerusalem, which has included supercessionist language and tendentious discussions of what is happening in Israel and between Israel and its neighbours, has echoes in Australian Church debate. Other Church leaders adopt broadly Leftist political agendas which can result in seepage of anti-Semitic language and material into religious discourse. The most disturbing issue in this regard in the period in review came during a visit to the Middle East by a delegation of senior Australian Christian personalities. One of their number Rev Rod Benson, published a weblog of his impressions which included the following entry written after a visit to Yad Vashem: “The tragic irony is that what was perpetrated against European Jews by Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s is very similar to what is being perpetrated against Palestinian Arabs by elements within the Israeli political and military elite today. Indeed it is arguable that the same reprehensible ideology is at play and appears unstoppable. Critics may denounce me for making the connection, on several grounds, and it is politically incorrect to speak these words from the cultural perspective I inherit. Yet I have no doubt that the connection between the practices of extremist Nazism and extremist Zionism is valid. Of course, there are differences too: the most obvious of which are that European Jews did not employ suicide bombers to make their political points; and that the Israeli apparatus of oppression and suppression is vastly more sophisticated than anything the Nazis used...”

Following a meeting between members of the delegation to the Middle East and Australian Jewish figures (in which the author of this report participated) Rev Benson revised the entry and indicated that he had not originally fully appreciated the impact of his original comments.

There was considerable concern within the Jewish community that the re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross, which was part of the official schedule of events for Catholic World Youth Day, held in 2008 in Sydney. However, although there were some controversial inclusions which had the potential to promote anti-Semitism if not staged carefully, the performance did not have any negative impact. This was to a large degree a result of the goodwill which has been established over many years between the Jewish community and the Catholic Church in Australia.

It is important to emphasise that the attitude towards anti-Semitism from the mainstream Australian churches is overwhelmingly hostile and that the most vocal condemnations of anti-Jewish prejudice in Australia often come from Church leaders or public figures connected to mainstream churches.

### **On-line media**

Computer communications technology, which has become increasingly part of the lives of Australians, is relevant to any discussion of anti-Semitism in Australia today. In addition to allowing neo-Nazis and anti-Semites in Australia to receive information and produce professional-quality, up-to-date propaganda, on-line services are of concern for a number of reasons. The writer of this paper is all too aware of the international and global nature of the internet. Jewish Australians are affected by the way anti-Semitic groups and individuals have used social networking media and also suffer the consequences of distorted and false material located via search engines. On a regular basis, members of the Jewish community report concerns regarding these, as well as websites and newsgroups located outside Australia. While the global context must be recognised, material emanating outside Australia is not within the ambit of this report.

Anti-Semitic and threatening e-mail has now become the most common means of anti-Semitic harassment in Australia. As more members of the Jewish community, including Holocaust survivors, establish e-mail accounts, the greater the prospects of hate, abuse and intimidation being sent to them this way. In addition to material transmitted by electronic mail, many un-moderated newsgroups dealing with Australian issues have allowed for individual bigots and anti-Jewish propagandists to promote material to a new and potentially larger audience.

Internet newsletters, sent to individuals with an interest in a specific subject, also can serve as vehicles for hate propagandists, as do websites maintained by extremist groups.

The internet has also been used as a means for racists to promote and purchase material such as neo-Nazi computer games. It is relatively easy and requires little effort for individuals and organisations to develop websites which become part of the internet. Because there is so much material on the internet, the more sophisticated group will try to establish links with mainstream or less overtly racist sites as well as promoting their material through newsgroups and lists.

The web-sites can be separated into a number of categories. Some have the primary purpose of promoting an ideology or philosophy which is fundamentally anti-Semitic. Others promote a range of conspiracy theories, including some which are anti-Semitic. A third type promote racist organisations, which include anti-Semitism in their world view while they do not necessarily include anti-Semitism in their public utterances. A further group provides direct links to anti-Semitic material. In the last category there are internet “newspapers” which combine features of all the above. Material published on the Internet can be relatively simply adapted to form the base of hate mail and abuse and there have been reports received during the past year of members of the Australian Jewish community being e-mailed (always anonymously) slabs of anti-Jewish material downloaded from anti-Jewish websites. Individuals and Jewish organisations reported that they had been in receipt of (anonymous) anti-Semitic electronic mail and e-mail newsletters sent, unsolicited, by anti-Semitic groups, at a rate of more than four times per week during the period in review. This means of harassment is closest in effect to anonymous telephone calls than hate mail, given the physical processes involved in its receipt.

### **Anti-Semitic organisations and publications**

Australia hosts to a plethora of organisations which promote anti-Semitism, including some who have this as their primary purpose. The groups vary greatly in their membership, their activities and their target audiences. Some of the individuals who lead far right-wing and anti-Semitic organisations have been involved in extremist political activity for decades. The organisations which they have led are supplemented by a changing group of individuals and minute groupings of individuals, including some who have established their presence primarily through their activities on the internet

(which permits the small organisations to maintain an existence and gives potential recruits a point of contact).

It should be noted that not all anti-Semitic organisations can be accurately classified as “far right”. There are conspiracy theorists who are identified with quasi New Age, Libyan-inspired “Third Way” and political Islamist philosophies which also have promoted anti-Semitism. These groups continue to feed a steady stream of anti-Jewish propaganda to their followers. The Australian far-right fringe is internally dynamic and in a constant state of flux. Individuals who promote, for example, a return to policies which actively disadvantage Indigenous Australians, have shown a mobility between overtly anti-Semitic groups, populist movements and pseudo-militia groups. The extremist elements of the anti-immigration movement divide their time and attention between these groups and neo-Nazi or quasi-nationalist movements.

In addition to organisations, although not necessarily totally separate from them, are a number of individuals who are involved actively in distributing anti-Semitic material on the Internet, through leaflets, sending hate mail or seeking to make interventions in the mainstream media. In many cases these individuals act in the name of an organisation in which they are either the only member or the only active member.

Between them, the various anti-Semitic organisations have a growing number of internet sites which are permanently available to users of online services, newsgroups and online clubs which regularly post their views, newspapers and newsletters, which are published as often as weekly, a number of monthly and bi-monthly magazines some of which are available at news stands and meetings which pay varying degrees of attention to the anti-Semitic elements of the respective agendas.

The paranoia and political extremist views concerning what each believe to be the political and economic establishment has drawn together far-right, far-left and some anarchist groups, in opposition to “globalisation”, various government policy proposals which they perceive as empowering a state which they view as a political enemy and to Israel. In each case, there has been evidence of almost interchangeable anti-Semitic rhetoric coming from groups which would regard themselves as being diametrically opposed, politically and ideologically. The elements of the Islamic and Arabic-speaking communities which promote intense dislike of, and hostility towards, Jews find themselves in the position of drawing on some of the same material as White Supremacists, “Identity” groups and other overt racists, purely because of their common hatred of Jews.

A number of small organisations which claim to be “Christian” but emphasise race more than religion, continue to serve a small constituency. In Australia they conduct services and ceremonies, publish newsletters and leaflets, sell books and videos and use the internet to reach much larger audiences in Australia and internationally. Some of these are “Identity” Churches which are overtly anti-Semitic while a much smaller number adopted some of the teachings of “Identity” Churches, such as the racial link between Jews of the Bible and White Anglo-Saxons, while rejecting the program elements of these organisations.

In most cities, small groups of neo-Nazis, sometimes including violent skinheads, have come to attention during the past year. Racist skinheads not necessarily aligned to any formal organisation are known to be present in small numbers in cities and towns spread around Australia and have allegedly been involved in racist violence against Asian students and harassment of members of left-wing groups. Attempts to exploit these groups or direct their violence towards Jews and other minorities are common. These groups, which are little more than gangs, are notable for their acceptance and promotion of ideology to rationalise and justify their anti-social behaviour.

The far-right engage in seemingly endless power struggles, some ideological and tactical but more often personal. The fighting became particularly intense after One Nation enjoyed a brief period of electoral success and individuals, some of whom had decades of involvement in a variety of anti-immigration and/or neo-Nazi groups jockeyed for positions close to the levers of power. This was particularly evident in the machinations of the various Australia First movements, factions and individuals, during the period in review.

### **Responses to anti-Semitism**

It is possible to address anti-Semitism through a legal and social regime which confronts racism, without being specifically identified. In Australia this is the general rule, although through education and coalition building, anti-Semitism as a specific, archetypal form of racism is directly addressed.

Concern at racism has prompted a counter-reaction from a number of opinion leaders, including a number of serving politicians in state and federal parliaments. Most state and territory legislatures have passed motions condemning racism, calling for Reconciliation and affirming the values of tolerance and diversity, during the past six years. The Federal Government has instituted a National Harmony Day, on the United Nations Day for the

Elimination of Racism, which is marked by government and the community in many ways, but is generally used to honour individuals and organisations who have been active in promoting Australian multiculturalism.

Australia's Federal Government has, in recent years, been prominent in international forums opposing anti-Semitism and promoting education against racism. The Federal and State governments have supported, through funding and other support, a range of projects of Jewish communal organisations designed to reduce prejudice. Laws have been enacted which provide a degree of recourse to victims of racism. Politicians from the major political parties have repeatedly both condemned anti-Semitism and chastised their political opponents for not being sufficiently pro-active in combating anti-Semitism.

The good cooperation between different religious communities has been evident in recent years, with a number of joint statements condemning racism and intolerance, as well as supportive statements by one or another of the Australian religious denominations. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the National Council of Churches in Australia and the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils have made a number of joint calls for tolerance. A number of Christian groups and the Baha'i faith have condemned anti-Semitic attacks and Jewish groups joined others in condemning racism against Australian Arabs and vilification of Muslims. This is in addition to the statements issued by groups from one or other religion/faith condemning racism and/or anti-Semitism, with Muslim groups such as Affinity, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Committee, the Australian Intercultural Society and the Uniting Church prominent in this activity.

Churches were also important proponents of diversity and tolerance, often in concert with the Jewish community. The Uniting Church in Australia is continuing the process of exploring ways of taking joint action with the Jewish community to combat prejudice. The Catholic Church promoted inter-religious and multi-faith understanding as a particular focus in the lead up to the Year 2000 and continues to promote tolerance and understanding in the lead up to Australia's hosting of World Youth Day in 2008. There were also welcome signs of movement in the direction of better relations between the Anglican Church and the Jewish community, with the establishment of the formal Anglican Jewish Australian Dialogue.

One of the most encouraging recent developments in responding to anti-Semitism and racism is a broad spectrum of educational initiatives, coming from government, community organisations, the business sector and individuals.

The Federal Government, through the Anti-Racism Education campaign and the on-going public awareness programmes conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, has been pro-active in its efforts to place objective information before the Australian community on matters which had been subjected to misrepresentation by racist organisations.

In January 2000 the Australian Government participated in the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust. Australia was one of the countries which endorsed the final Declaration which included commitments to strengthen “efforts to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust” and to “promote education about the Holocaust in our schools and universities, in our communities and encourage it in other institutions” as part of the reaffirmation of “humanity’s common aspiration for mutual understanding and justice”. Australia subsequently participated in The Stockholm Forums on Combating Intolerance (January 2001) on Truth, Justice and Reconciliation (April 2002) and on The Prevention of Genocide (January 2004).

Together with the Government of Indonesia, Australia initiated Asia/Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogues, with the inaugural Dialogue taking place in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in December 2004. The Dialogues have proven to be excellent opportunities for the promotion of programmes designed to break down inter-religious stereotyping and to promote co-operation in the cause of communal harmony. The second Dialogue was convened in Cebu, The Philippines, in 2006, the third in Waitangi, New Zealand, in 2007 and the fourth in Cambodia in 2008. The dialogues now have New Zealand and the Philippines as additional co-hosts.

Late in 1995, the federal government introduced legislation to give recourse to victims of racism. The law, administered by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, seeks to conciliate complaints of racial harassment and vilification. If conciliation is not achieved, hearings take place and penalties can be ordered. While details of complaints are not made public, at least seven formal complaints regarding anti-Semitism were lodged with the Commission during the first years of the new law, and the determinations are beginning to provide indications of how useful the law will prove to be in dealing with anti-Semitism.

A complaint lodged under the Act against an article appearing in an April 1996 issue of the Arabic language newspaper *El Telegraph* was successfully conciliated by the HREOC, with the outcome including the publication of articles which hopefully will contribute to the historiography of understanding of Australian racism and international anti-Semitism. *El*

Telegraph had reprinted articles from a newspaper based in the Arab Middle East, which included extracts from the notorious anti-Semitic concoction *The Protocols of The Learned Elders of Zion*. At least one other complaint, also against a media outlet, was settled without reference to a public hearing.

All four cases which were referred to public hearings, against the Adelaide Institute Web-site, anti-Jewish propagandist Olga Scully, *The Nation* newspaper and Bible Believers/ Anthony Grigor-Scott, have demonstrated the complexities of the process of resolving complaints under the original process, taking more than four years between the complaint and the adjudication. The process for complaint resolution has since been considerably streamlined. At the time of writing, Contempt proceedings against Fredrick Toben of the Adelaide Institute have commenced, but have not been heard in court.

All Australian States and the Australian Capital Territory had legislation supplementary to the Federal Act. The success and utility of these laws is a matter of on-going debate. Some shortcomings were brought in to focus in the attempts by a Melbourne victim of an anti-Semitic assault, in which the perpetrators were swiftly identified, to achieve recourse and have the victims appropriately penalised.

In past years there have been actions taken by local councils, public authorities and corporations to ensure that the laws have not been breached, as well as many successful conciliations of complaints lodged under NSW and ACT law.

A voluntary regulatory body, the Australian Press Council was, until the passage of anti-racism laws in a number of states and now federally, the most significant body which considered complaints of anti-Semitism. Although it no longer plays the same key role, it remains another arena for disputes to be resolved over questions relating to racism and anti-Semitism. In November 2003, The Australian Press Council “upheld in part” a complaint against *The Sydney Morning Herald* for publishing, in August 2003, a cartoon that juxtaposed images of the Warsaw Ghetto and the wall being built by Israel on the West Bank. The judgement said “the council agrees that the cartoon was so offensive as to breach its principles ...”

The Australian Broadcasting Authority sets and enforces broad community standards. The complexities of applying the legalistic and bureaucratic procedures to the real-time world of electronic media, however, renders this body problematic as an agency to combat racism and anti-Semitism. It does speak with some moral authority however and should not be totally disregarded. Commercial television has not given rise to serious concern in its depictions of Jews or Judaism. The Jewish community recognises

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that the guidelines on the depiction of a range of matters, including religion, ethnicity and nationality, contribute to developing a more tolerant culture with a sensitive media corps.

In most of the cases of anti-Semitism in the print media, the newspapers and magazines published views of readers offended by them in letters columns. However, this was not universal, and even when it occurred, the newspapers themselves rarely acknowledged any fault on their part by originally printing anti-Semitism. Individuals who are the victims of some of the more extreme acts of anti-Semitic intimidation do have recourse to laws other than those specified above. A variety of sporting bodies have introduced anti-racism codes of conduct during recent years. The focus in all cases was also on “offensive language”.

## NEW ZEALAND

### **Background**

A 2006 census recorded that 6,858 (0.16%) of the population stated their religious affiliation as Jewish/Judaism and 1,599 (0.04%) of the population considered their ethnic group to be Israeli/Jewish. This is less than the estimated 10,000 in 2004-5.

Historically, New Zealand has generally been perceived as a safe and anti-Semitic free country. However over the past few years, incidents, perhaps influenced by local and international events, have shown otherwise.

### **2007 Year in Summary**

2007 has been a relatively quiet year in terms of anti-Semitism in New Zealand. In 2007, there were 12 reported incidents of anti-Semitism<sup>1</sup>. This is a decrease of 62.5% on the previous year (2006) when there were 32 reported incidents. In 2005, there were 17 reported incidents of anti-Semitism. Unfortunately in October 2007, there was another cemetery desecration which combined both anti-Israel and anti-Semitic graffiti.

### **Breakdown of 2007 Reported Incidents of Anti-Semitism**

The breakdown of reported incidents is similar to that of previous years (2005, 2006).

28% of reported incidents in 2007 comprised of emails or letters that originated from the following two groups of people:

1. Right-wing inspired groups
2. Mentally ill people

The remaining 72% of reported incidents in 2007 consisted of:

1. Graffiti and vandalism (40%)
2. Suspicious people and vehicles (32%)

The emails and letters from right-wing groups included references to Adolf Hitler and also contained swastikas. The vandalism contained both swastikas and anti-Israel sentiment.

### **Karori Cemetery Desecration**

In October 2007, the desecration of six graves in the Karori Jewish Cemetery with anti-Semitic and anti-Israel graffiti attracted little attention in New Zealand from politicians or from the media. When two Jewish cemeteries in Wellington (the Bolton Street and Makara cemeteries) were desecrated in 2004 there was extensive media coverage of the incidents.

The graffiti itself indicated that the attacks were inspired by an article about the new Israeli Ambassador Yuval Rotem, which had been published in Wellington's Dominion Post newspaper several days before.

The front-page article, by Hank Schouten, was supposedly a comprehensive interview with Canberra-based Rotem. But the story actually centred on Rotem's well-intentioned casual aside that he would like to improve relations and understanding between Israel and New Zealand by employing a Maori in his office. Schouten and the Post focused on what Rotem doubtlessly thought was an innocuous casual comment, titling the article "I need a Maori", and quoted de Bres on Kiwi anti-discrimination laws.

The Karori Cemetery graves were all defaced with vivid blue paint. As well as more typical anti-Semitic phrases like "Hitler RIP", "Rot you filth" and "Juden swine", the grave-vandals had written phrases like "Terror State Israel Burn", "Schouten – Rotem is ZIONIST PIG" and "DE BRES YOU SWINE – OUT"<sup>2</sup>.

No arrests have been made in relation to the incident.

### **A Note on Activism**

As reported last year, the most public right wing group in New Zealand is the National Front. In 2007 there was not much reported activity in relation to this group.

The major news of 2007 came in early October with nationwide police raids, known as the "anti-terror raids". Seventeen people were arrested on terrorism charges. These charges, which related to training camps and other activities, were subsequently reduced to firearms and weapon charges. The case is on-going.

Most of those arrested were New Zealand-born. While there is nothing reported to suggest that the end targets were to be Jewish people or facilities,

one of the men charged, Omar Hamed, was reported as being “a 19-year-old Greek-born part-Palestinian... who is a member of a Palestinian rights group and the founder of an anti-capitalist organisation”<sup>3</sup>, while another, Tame Iti, who is accused of running the camps, was reported as having “made an impromptu visit to Iran earlier this year.”<sup>4</sup>

## **General Trends**

New Zealand is not generally thought of as synonymous with terrorism. However, the 2005 Security Intelligence Service (SIS) report<sup>5</sup> continued to emphasise the need for “increased vigilance” against terrorism and “counter-terrorism continues to be the biggest single component of the Service’s activities”. The London bombings of 2005 have highlighted the potential for home-grown terrorists. The 2005 report again stated that “there are individuals in New Zealand who are sympathetic to Al Qaeda, have strongly anti-western views and have links to extremists living overseas. There are individuals who have participated in jihad in places like Bosnia. The SIS has found that here, as in other countries, “there is a complex symbiotic relationship between criminals and Islamic extremists”.

As stated last year, the New Zealand Herald reported that a small group of Maori Muslims are being recruited in prison and claim to support Osama bin-Laden. The Federation of Islamic Associations is reportedly funding this group. Combined with the “terror raids” this is of more concern.

## **Government Liaison**

The New Zealand Jewish Council (via the CSG) continues to work with the New Zealand police to facilitate the fast resolution of threats and to work towards better protecting Jewish life and Jewish way of life in New Zealand.

It is also the responsibility of the New Zealand Jewish Council to represent the community’s political interests with the government.

## **End notes**

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this report, a “reported incident” means an anti-Semitic incident or event that is reported to the Community Security Group (CSG). The CSG falls under the auspices of the New Zealand Jewish Council.

<sup>2</sup> Extract from [http://www.ajjac.org.au/?id=articles&\\_action=showArticleDetails&articleID=3101](http://www.ajjac.org.au/?id=articles&_action=showArticleDetails&articleID=3101)

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<sup>3</sup> Extract from: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10472187](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10472187)

<sup>4</sup> Extract from: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10476746&ref=rss](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10476746&ref=rss)

<sup>5</sup> See: <http://www.nzsis.govt.nz/publications/ar05/nzsis-ar05.pdf>

## JAPAN

*Committee Against  
Anti-Semitism in Japan*

Due to Japan's rigid enforcement of national seclusion prior to the 1850s, Westerners, including Jews, have a relatively brief history in this country. The Jewish community is small and widely dispersed, and at least partly for this reason, older forms of anti-Semitism, such as "blood libels," the defacing of Jewish property, pogroms, etc., have never occurred. On the other hand, two other forms of anti-Semitism have appeared sporadically. The older of these is "conspiratorial" anti-Semitism, some vestiges of which remain. This was inspired by the "Protocols," which was disseminated via Europe, particularly Czarist Russia, from the early part of the 20th century, and then later from Nazi Germany. The second phenomenon, which evolved from the first, is the commercialization of anti-Semitism, by which individuals who claim particular insights into economic, political or social issues hold seminars, at which they market books and videos in which they attribute various world events to "Jewish power." This initially emerged in the 1970s and then surged during the "bubble economy" in the late 1980s, a time of great economic uncertainty.

From the mid-1990s, carefully organized protests to major Japanese media groups, publishers and retailers have achieved some successes in discouraging the propagation of "hate books" and defamatory articles in mass-circulated newspapers and magazines. Freedom of expression is guaranteed in Japan, and many book distributors and retailers tend to interpret this as releasing them from the responsibility to apply basic standards of decency to the merchandise they handle. It is, unfortunately, still common to find offensive and racist books openly displayed in shops such as the main outlet of Kinokuniya – Tokyo's largest bookstore. One such title was "Sekai no Yami wo Kataru: Oya to Ko no Kaiwa-shu" (Talking About the Darkness of the World: An Anthology of Father-and-Child Conversations), by "Internet journalist"

Tadashi "Richard" Koshimizu. The book's cover art depicts David Rockefeller, wearing a yarmulke, with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il at his side, remotely controlling a plane as it crashes into the World Trade Center. On the office wall there is a portrait of Hitler and on the table there are books entitled "Talmud," "Project New World Order" and "Greater Israel."

### Recent Developments

As in other countries, anti-Semites in Japan are becoming more skilled at dissembling, for instance, by vigorously denying any bias against Jews (and even going so far as to denounce anti-Semitism) on the one hand, while attacking Jews and Israel through such euphemistic terms as "Zionists" or "Khazars." One book adopting such a tone was published in February 2007 by Tokuma Shoten. A collaboration by Benjamin Fulford and Japanese writer Osamu Tekina, it was titled "Niiche wa miniute ita Yudaya-Kiristuokyo 'Sekai Shihai' no karakuri" (Nietzsche Understood! Judeo-Christian Scheme for 'Ruling the World'). This work, which was judged to contain numerous defamatory statements – despite vigorous disavowals by its Canadian author – was protested by the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles and the Committee against Anti-Semitism in Japan.

Tokuma Shoten, which from the 1980s had published several dozen anti-Semitic titles, including a translation of Henry Ford's "The International Jew," had pledged in 1995 to refrain from issuing future defamatory works, conceded the work was irresponsible and, while not recalling copies already stocked by retailers, ceased to fill any new orders. To further demonstrate its good faith, Tokuma Shoten subsequently agreed to a host a seminar organized by two representatives from the Wiesenthal Center and to publish a Japanese translation of "Dismantling the Big Lie: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" by Steven L. Jacobs and Mark Weitzman.

The propagation of anti-Semitic messages via the Internet and particularly in web logs ("blogs") has raised new concerns. As in many other countries, the monitoring of sites by operators of net domains and enforcement of rules concerning race-baiting and malicious content is extremely limited in Japan, and as libel litigation is both cumbersome and costly, bloggers operate with practically no restraints. The anonymity afforded by the Internet, needless to say, makes it virtually impossible to grasp the number of "true believers" of such contents, as well as further obscuring activities by hate groups.

The Internet has also abetted the convergence of individuals who share a common cause. These include 9/11 conspiracy buffs, Holocaust deniers

and anti-Zionists, some of whom may be receiving encouragement of, and financing from, Middle Eastern governments, particularly Iran. In December 2006, for example, Kaoru Nakamaru, author of several conspiracy books; Holocaust denier Aiji Kimura; former Forbes magazine journalist Benjamin Fulford; and the abovementioned Koshimizu – who continues to rant on his web site and in public forums that the World Trade Center was brought down by "Jewish hydrogen bombs" – appeared in a joint panel discussion at a "World Forum" in Tokyo to advance their respective theories before a paying audience.

With a rapidly aging population and the emergence of China as Asia's new economic superpower, Japan's political and economic influence has begun to wane. With few natural resources and dependency on exports of manufactured goods and technology transfer, Japan's economy is likely to be increasingly vulnerable to soaring prices for petroleum, grains and other commodities. Many Japanese, rather than confront their country's problems in a realistic manner, may fall prey to demagogues touting oddball theories, no matter how ludicrous. While Jews in Japan probably need not fear for their personal safety, they are nonetheless concerned to see a small number of unscrupulous, attention-seeking demagogues openly tout anti-Semitic attitudes for personal publicity and profit – particularly since so few are willing to denounce such outrageous claims.

# COMMUNITY PORTRAIT

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF AZERBAIJAN

The Republic of Azerbaijan is the legal successor of the Azerbaijan SSR. Its area is 86.6 thousand kilometers square; its population is 8.7 million. The Constitution of Azerbaijan was adopted through national referendum on November 12, 1995. The head of the state is its president, elected for five years through direct general election. The legislative authority belongs to the Milli Mejlis, consisting of 125 members, also appointed through general election.

Since the fall of 2003, the republic's president has been Ilham Aliyev, son of the former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (1969–1982) and president of Azerbaijan (1993–2003), Heydar Aliyev.

In Azerbaijan, religion is separate from the state. All confessions are equal before the law. The national educational system is secular. The official language of the Republic of Azerbaijan is Azerbaijani. According to the most recent census, there are people of 140 ethnicities living in Azerbaijan, 22 of them having compact settlements in different regions of the state.

There are three Jewish communities in modern Azerbaijan: Bukharian Jews, Ashkenazi Jews, and Georgian Jews. The community of Bukharian Jews is the oldest, their ancestors arriving to the territory almost 15 centuries ago, according to some data. This version claims that after the Mazdakeans were subdued in Iran (late 5th – early 6th century A.D.), most of the Iranian Jews who had supported them were exiled to the outskirts of the empire, i.e., today's Northern Azerbaijan and Southern Dagestan. The ancestors of the Bukharian Jews spoke a South-Western dialect of the Persian language, which the modern Bukharian Jewish language (Juhuri or Judeo-Tat) is descended from. However the Bukharians themselves have legends of the first Jews settling in Eastern Caucasus as early as the 8th century B.C. during the Assyrian exile of the ten missing tribes.

The first Ashkenazi Jews arrived to Baku in the 19th century after the territory of Azerbaijan was annexed by Russia through the Gulistan Treaty

of 1813. At the same time Georgian Jews appeared in Azerbaijan. Also living here since the 19th century are the Judaizing Russian sectarians – the Sabbatarians and the Gers.

Since 1870, as the oil industry in Baku grew rapidly, many more Jews began arriving to Northern Azerbaijan from the European part of Russia. These were mostly intellectuals: engineers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers. There were 14,791 Jews living in Azerbaijan in 1897.

Over the Soviet period the Jewish population of Azerbaijan grew times several. According to official data there were 40,000 of them by the 1970s, and the real numbers were even larger.

After the existing Zionist organizations were destroyed in the 1920s, and most of the Bukharian Jewish intelligentsia killed in the repressions of the 1930s, the only remaining Jewish institution in the republic were several synagogues, controlled rigidly by the government. In the 1970s, a mass “Tatization” campaign was started in Azerbaijan, wherein many Bukharian Jews were forced to register as Tats. Some Shirvan Jews from such towns as Vartashen (now Oguz), Kirovabad (now Ganja), Geokchay, and others, registered in their passports as Azerbaijanis. However, all observers note that the Jewish population of Azerbaijan has never encountered any anti-Semitic behavior on the part of the population around them.

The religious tolerance of the local rulers and citizens, attracting many Jews to Azerbaijan, was noted in documents dating as far back as the 13th century, in the Ilhanide times. The high tolerance of the Azerbaijani people and the lack of anti-Semitism in Azerbaijan are described in the memoir of the famous early-twentieth-century Zionist Jacob Weinshal. The leaders of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress also mention in their appeal: “Dialogue with Islam is one of the EAJC’s main agendas. The millennium-old history of the Jews of Northern Caucasus and Azerbaijan is a striking example of an ongoing neighborliness with local Muslims.”

In the late 1980s, mass aliyah of Azerbaijani Jews began. It was caused to a large extent by the political and economical instability riddling the country in the years 1989–1993. Between 1989 and 2007 approximately 60,000 people emigrated from Azerbaijan to Israel. According to some data, the common number of Jewish Azerbaijani expatriates living in Israel equals 100,000. Over 11,000 have gone to Russia in search of a living, despite formally still being members of the Jewish community of Azerbaijan.

According to information from the leaders of religious communities, there are about 16,000 Jews currently residing in Azerbaijan, of which:

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a) Bukharian Jews – about 11,000 (6,000 in Baku, 3,600 in Quba (pronounced Guba in Azerbaijani), and 1,300 in the other regions of the state, mainly in the cities of Sumgait, Ganja, Oguz, and Geokchay);

b) Ashkenazi Jews – 4,300 (of which 3,300 in Baku);

c) Georgian Jews – about 600.

Also, there are descendants of Sabbatarians living in the settlements of Privolnoye and Kirovka.

The first Jewish organizations to appear in Azerbaijan – the Alef youth club and the Jewish cultural centre – were established in Baku at the end of the 1980s, on the wave of the perestroika. In 1992, the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and the International Association of Jewish Studies and Jewish Culture held an international seminar in Baku, called “Bukharian Jews: History and Modernity”.

Since 1996, Jewish communal life in Azerbaijan has flourished. The Sochnut Jewish Agency, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the Va’ad le-Atzala have initiated a significant number of various programs. Under the auspices of the Joint were created the charitable organization Chesed-Gershon, the Jewish cultural center, the Hillel youth club, and a kindergarten. The Sochnut created the Amishav youth club and 22 groups of educational programs in Baku and other cities in Azerbaijan where Jews live – Sumgait, Ganja, Quba, Oguz.

The Va’ad le-Atzala has helped to open a yeshiva and a school in Baku in 1999-2001, and another Yeshiva in Krasnaya Sloboda. Another Jewish school and kindergarten opened in Baku in September 2002 (receiving their official license in 2003) with the aid of the Or Avner Foundation. In December 2005, a kindergarten opened in Krasnaya Sloboda, also within the Or Avner network. In October 2006, an educational center was opened by the Jewish Agency office in Baku. On May 31, 2007, the ceremonial first stone was laid in the foundation of the Chabad Or Avner learning center in Baku. However, the branch of the Maimonides State Classical Academy failed to receive a license from the Ministry of Justice and a quality certificate from the Ministry of Education after having functioned in the state since 1998, and was forced to close in 2007.

There have been women’s charitable organizations founded in Baku: the humanitarian Association of Jewish Women (1992) and Hava (1996) – which have assumed the responsibility of providing medical care, material and other support to Jewish families in need, etc. There are about 1,700 people on register with Chesed-Gershon, which has branches aside from Baku in Sumgait, Ganja, Oguz, and the Privolnoye settlement. Religious communities also have welfare programs.

There are four monthly Jewish magazines published in Baku: Our Israel (published by the Jewish cultural center of the Israeli embassy in Azerbaijan); Or Shelanu (published by the Jewish cultural center of the Joint); The Tower (published by the Hillel youth club); and Chesed-Gershon (published by the welfare center of the same name). In November 2004, the Chabad-Lubavitch community of Azerbaijan whose head is chief Ashkenazi rabbi of Azerbaijan Meir Brook, launched a website called Jews of Azerbaijan: [www.jewish.az](http://www.jewish.az).

There are seven Jewish religious communities registered in the state. There are Bukharian Jewish religious communities in Baku (chair – Semen Ikhiilov), Quba (chair – Boris Simanduyev), Sumgait, and Oguz. There are Ger communities in Privolnoye and Kirovka. Krasnaya Sloboda is the only remaining settlement in the FSU where Jews live in a compact fashion. There are synagogues in all these cities, and a prayer house in Privolnoye.

The Ashkenazi and Georgian synagogues in Baku (chairman of the religious community of European Jews is Gennady Zelmanovitch, chairman of the community of Georgian Jews – Abik Charukhchev) occupy the new multi-story building, erected with the aid of the EAJC instead of the old decrepit one in March 2003. Before December 2004, there was a rabbinical court branch dealing with issues of marriage, conversion to Judaism etc., but it was closed by the Israeli Ministry of Justice as part of a campaign to economize state resources. In May 2007 the Kashrut Department of Russia's main rabbinate issued a kashrut certificate to some of the produce of the Gadji Jamalhan farm enterprise. The problem of renovating the synagogue of Bukharian Jews in Baku is currently being discussed. Fall 2007 saw the closing of the Nari-manovskoye cemetery in Baku, and the problem of reburial of the Jews who were interred there has yet to be solved.

The government is kindly disposed toward the Jewish community, which proves the state's democracy and the nation's tolerance. President Aliyev pays regular visits to Quba, meeting with the leaders of the Azerbaijani Jewish community. At the parliamentary elections of 2005, Jewish E. Abramov was elected delegate of Quba. In July 2007 the decision was made that entry exams to universities will not be sat on Saturdays.

There are, however, some anti-Semitic tendencies, as evident from the protests on the part of opposition organizations against holding a session of the World Jewish Congress in Baku in 2006 (postponed due to the illness of the WJC president E. Bronfman). Thus, a special dispatch by the Intelligentsia Movement of Azerbaijan stated that should the session be held, Azerbaijan "risks being misunderstood by the whole Islamic world and losing its support." In the second half of 2006, a number of anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli

actions were initiated in Baku by radical Islamists. The functioning Islamic Party of Azerbaijan also gives anti-Israeli addresses. In May 2008 its activists protested against a Lane of Azerbaijani-Israeli Friendship being opened in Baku. In 2007 Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was translated to Azerbaijani from Turkish and 500 copies were published, but after both the authorities and the general public reacted in a markedly negative fashion, all copies were withdrawn from circulation and a criminal case was initiated against the publisher and the printers.

Diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Israel were established in 1992. The Azerbaijan-Israel cultural relations society was founded and began publishing the *Az-Iz* newspaper (*aziz* means dear, darling in Azerbaijani). In 1993 an Israeli embassy opened in Baku in 1993 (ambassador since September 2005 – Arthur Lenk), but an Azerbaijani embassy in Israel has still not been founded, even though an Azerbaijani cultural center did open in 2008. There are Israeli companies functioning actively in Azerbaijan.

There is currently an Israeli-Azerbaijani inter-parliamentary group in the Knesset, presided over by Knesset member Yosef Shagal. The Azerbaijan-Israel Association (*Az-Iz*) was founded in April 2007, also headed by Mr. Shagal. There is a functioning Congress of Azerbaijanis in Israel (president – Alex Shapiro-Suliman). In July 2007 it was announced that a department of Azerbaijani Studies was to open in the Ramat Gan University. Vice-premier of the Israeli cabinet council, Avigdor Lieberman, visited Azerbaijan in August 2007. During this visit, the new building of the Israeli cultural center in Baku was unveiled. In November 2007, a theoretical and practical conference took place at Baku State University in honor of the 15th anniversary of Azerbaijani-Israeli diplomatic relations. In May 2008, the state's Jewish creative collectives held a large concert in the Rashid Beybutov Baku Song Theatre, dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the state of Israel, and an exhibition was opened of young artists who painted Israeli landscapes. In Baku and Quba, lanes of Azerbaijani-Israeli friendship were laid. On May 26, 2008, Y. Shagal initiated a Day of Caucasian Jewish Culture in the Knesset.

The economic relations between the two states have also intensified: trade turnover between them in 2007 equaled \$2 billion. Azerbaijan has become one of Israel's largest oil suppliers, and Azerbaijani representatives are learning at a number of Israeli teaching programs. The first Azerbaijani-Israeli business forum on information and telecommunication technology (ITT) was held in Baku in June 2007.

Azerbaijan is trying to form a pro-Azerbaijan lobby of Israeli and American Jewish politicians who could help to revoke the Jackson–Vanik amend-

ment and the sanctions stipulated by the 907th amendment to the Freedom Support Act before the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is settled, and to prevent the persecution of Armenians in 1915–1923 from being declared genocide. The Azerbaijan government strives to get the Jewish community involved in the policy of “Holocaustizing history” wherein they attempt to prove facts of mass killing of Quban Jews by Armenians in 1918–1919, in order to identify them with the Holocaust, like with the capture of Khodjali in 1992. There are two films currently being made on the topic.

On February 9–13, 2006, Baku and Quba were visited by a joint delegation of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress. On May 14–16, 2006, a Knesset delegation visited Baku with the help of the EAJC. On September 4, 2006, EAJC General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels hosted a delegation of Jewish writers, arriving in Baku as part of a mission of solidarity with the Jewish state, organized by the EAJC. The delegation met with the chairman of the Azerbaijan State Committee on Diaspora Relations Nazim Ibragimov, the leaders of the Writers’ Union of Azerbaijan, the leaders of the state’s Jewry, and the general public.

The Azerbaijan branch of the International Association of Jewish Studies and Jewish Culture was founded in 1992. A scholarly center opened by the Jewish cultural center (led by Mikhail Agarunov), whose goal is to create a database on the history, culture, and ethnography of the Jewish communities of Azerbaijan, to examine the collected documentation, and to publish the results of their research. The Jewish cultural center holds annual Jewish book festivals in Baku, Ganja, Quba, and Sumgait.

2001 saw an international theoretical and practical conference on the Bukharian Jews of the Caucasus in Baku. Scholars from Israel, Russia, the USA, and Azerbaijan presented papers on various aspects of the history and tradition of Caucasus Jews. On February 7, 2008, representatives of the Azerbaijan Jewish community arrived in Moscow to take part in the international theoretical and practical conference: “Bukharian Jews: a historic, cultural-ethnic, and religious dimension”.

In May 2005, in time for the anniversary of the Victory over Nazism, the Holocaust museum opened in Baku.

In February 2003 expatriates from the Bukharian Jewish community initiated the creation of the World Congress of Bukharian Jews at a founding convention in Tel Aviv.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ARMENIA

The Republic of Armenia is the legal successor of the Armenian SSR. Its area is 29.8 thousand kilometers square; its population is 3.231 million. The Armenian Constitution was adopted on July 5, 1995, as a result of a national referendum.

The head of the state is its president, elected for five years through direct general elections. The president of Armenia since April 2008 is Serzh Sargsyan. The legislative authority belongs to the National Assembly, whose members' term of office is four years.

According to semi-legendary tradition, Jews appeared in Armenia after Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II in 586 B.C. Groups of Jews were moved to Armenia from Palestine in the first century B.C. by the kings Tigran II and Artavazd. However, in the 4th century A.D., after Armenia was defeated by the Persian army, most of the Jews were driven away as captives. Separate Jewish groups remained in Armenia until the 13th-14th centuries. The Zok, a sub-ethnic Armenian group living in the Kapan region, are held to be descended from "Tigran's" Jews.

In the 19th century, after Armenia was annexed by the Russian Empire under the 1828 Treaty of Turkmenchay, Georgian and Ashkenazi Jews settled there, as well as Sabbataricians – Russian peasants who had converted to Judaism and were exiled to the new outskirts of the empire.

By 1970 the Jewish population of Armenia was 1048; by the end of the 1980s their number (including the Sabbataricians) was approximately 3,000.

In the 1990s most of the Armenian Jews (about 1,800) emigrated. Currently there are about 700 still living in Armenia, but their count keeps decreasing as 90-100 people emigrate each year. The main Jewish organization of the state is the Jewish community, based in Yerevan (its chairperson is Rimma Varjapetyan-Feller, member of the EAJC General Council). The community hosts a Jewish children's vocal ensemble called Keshet, a Sunday school, and an ulpan. The Keshet ensemble was awarded a diplo-

ma for the best performance at the festival “Armenia My Home” in Gyumri in 2007. The community publishes a newspaper called Magen David, aided by the EAJC. In 2004, the website [www.jewish.am](http://www.jewish.am) was launched.

A small group of Jews lives in the city of Vanadzor. Besides, there is a Sabbatarian community (its head M. I. Zharkov has recently passed away) in Sevan (former Yelenovka settlement) – most of its members also left Armenia in the 1990s. Currently there are no more than 11 Sabbatarian families living in Sevan, most of them retirees. The community of Sevan receives regular humanitarian aid, medicines, food parcels, and money to pay their electricity bills from the Jewish community of Armenia, which in turns receives all this from American Jews.

The only synagogue in the state is functioning in Yerevan; its rabbi is Armenia’s chief rabbi Hersch-Meir Burstein. The synagogue is situated in a private house, bought out in 1995. The same building hosts the Mordekhai Navi community center and the Torah Or Sunday school. The religious community has its own website – <http://www.yehudim.am>. The EAJC provides for matzos to be delivered annually to Armenia from Ukraine.

The Jewish community cooperates closely with the Sochnut: seminars are held, the community is supported, and youth participate in Jewish Agency programs in Israel.

The community had a conflict with the Joint in 2008, when the latter demanded that the database of the “DSOS” – Children’s Initiative program be transferred to the Chesed database. The Joint no longer supports the community.

In 2004, a “Tolerance – Lessons of the Holocaust” seminar for Armenian school teachers was held successfully; in 2008 Armenian teachers took part in a similar seminar held in Georgia. These seminars were jointly organized by the Jewish Community of Armenia, Armenia’s Ministry of Education, and the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress.

In July 2007, a Tolerance Center (head – Svetlana Arutyunyan) was established and legally recognized in Armenia, cofounded by R. Varjapetyan-Feller. The Center organized a conference in November 2007, called “Tolerance as Basis for Developing a Culture of Dignity”.

Rimma Varjapetyan also sits on the State Human Rights Defender’s expert group. Ms. Varjapetyan and rabbi Hersch-Meir Burstein joined the President of Armenia’s coordinating board of national public organizations, established in 2004. Rimma Varjapetyan-Feller also participated in the work of the OSCE International Conference on Anti-Semitism, taking place in Spain (Cordoba, 2005) and Romania (Bucharest, 2007).

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On May 28, 2008, the activists of the community met in its office with members of the American Jewish Committee Peter Rosenblatt and Barry Jacobson, who had met with the state's government.

On June 25, Rimma Varjapetyan met the U.S. Deputy Secretary of States David Kramer in the embassy of the United States to the Republic of Armenia.

On July 30, 2008, Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsyan solemnly awarded the head of the Armenian Jewish Community Rimma Varjapetyan with a medal for her input into developing Armenian-Jewish relations.

Diplomatic relations between Armenia and Israel were established in 1992. The acting ambassador of Israel to Armenia since 2008 is Shemi Tzur, who is also the ambassador of Israel to Kirgizstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. An Armenian-Israeli Society exists in the state, as well a parliamentary group led by the National Assembly member for the Flourishing Armenia party, Aram Safaryan. In 2004, the Jackson-Vanik amendment was rescinded for Armenia. In November 2005, an Israeli delegation led by Israel's chief Ashkenazi rabbi Y. Metzger visited Armenia on the invitation of the head of the Church of Armenia, Catholicos Garegin II. There is an Israeli-Armenian group in the Knesset (its head is Knesset member Ze'ev Elkin). The community has an Israeli cultural center, led by Georgy Faivush.

May 2008 saw celebrations in Yerevan of the 60th anniversary of Israel. In July the Armenian government decided to create a lane of Armenian-Israeli friendship and to plant 60 trees in honor of the anniversary of Israel's independence.

The relations between Armenia and Israel are overshadowed by the issue of Israel not recognizing the Armenian massacre of 1915 as genocide (this was last discussed in the Knesset in March 2008, the decision postponed indefinitely). Community representatives take regular part in rallies on the anniversaries of the beginning of the Armenian genocide, and they also participated in the work of the International Scholarly Conference in Honor of the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on April 20–21, 2005, in Yerevan.

A memorial to the victims of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust was ceremoniously unveiled in Yerevan on October 27, 2006. The erection of the memorial was initiated by the Jewish community of Armenia and its head in person; the Republican Party of Armenia supported the memorial financially. On January 26, 2007, the Jewish community of

Armenia published a declaration in support of the resolution issued by the United States House of Representatives, urging to recognize the Armenian genocide.

Still, some Armenians (mostly followers of marginal opposition parties) consider the Jews responsible for the 1915 genocide. Some governmental figures are not free from anti-Semitism either.

Certain publicists have claimed there was a “Jewish trace” in the Yerevan events of March 1-2, 2008, when the opposition attempted to challenge the results of the presidential elections, and that Israel and international Jewish structures were commissioning the help of the Armenian opposition in order to make Armenia revoke its charges against Turkey for the genocide of Armenians in 1915.

In October 2007, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, famous for his anti-Israeli proclamations, visited Armenia and received an honorary PhD from the Yerevan State University. The Jewish community of Armenia came out with severe criticism of this act, comparing Ahmadinejad to Goebbels.

In December 2007 the memorial to victims of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust in Yerevan was defiled. In June 2008 an anti-Semitic broadcast was aired on state television.

There is a Hebrew Studies department at the Yerevan State University. A Modern Hebrew textbook was published in Armenian in 2003. The lecture center of the National Jewish Culture University is functioning constantly. Excavations of an 11th-13th century Jewish cemetery began in the regional center of Ekhegnadzor, but they were suspended in 2006 for financial reasons. During a February 2006 meeting between R. Varjapetyan and the then Prime Minister of Armenia A. Margaryan, it was agreed that the state would partly fund the beautification of the cemetery area. S. Sargsyan, replacing A. Margaryan on the post, approved of this funding in July 2007; \$60,000 were granted, and there is now reconstruction work taking place in the excavation area.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF BELARUS

The Republic of Belarus – an independent state formed after the fall of the USSR – is the legal successor of the Belarus Soviet Socialist Republic. Its area is 207,000 kilometers square; its population is 9.675 million.

It has been a presidential republic since 1994. The head of the republic is its President (Alexander Lukashenko since 1994). The supreme representative and legislative institution is the parliament – the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus. The Parliament is bicameral, consisting of the House of Representatives and the Republican Council.

The first Jews appeared on the territory of modern Belarus in the 14th century, in the times of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. The descendants of the Jews who lived in that medieval state are still referred to as Litvaks. In the 17th-18th centuries the communities of Belarus were united in the so-called Lithuanian Va'ad, which cooperated with the Polish Va'ad of Four Lands. In the 17th century the Belarusian Jews suffered from the pogroms of Bogdan Khmelnsky and the Russian army which invaded in 1655. As a result of the Partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795, the territory of Belarus together with its Jewish population became part of the Russian Empire. At approximately the same time Hassidism spread in certain parts of the country. According to the census of 1897, over 900 thousand Jews lived in Belarus – 21.1 percent of the Jewish population of the Pale of Settlement in the Russian Empire. They were also the second most significant ethnic group (after the titular one) in the Belarusian lands, leaving even the traditionally large Polish diaspora behind in terms of quantity and relative density. World War I and the Civil War led to hastened urbanization of the Belarusian Jewry and its mass outflow from the republic. By the end of the 1930s there were about 400,000 Jews living in Belarus. After Soviet rule was established in 1920, the Jewish community was disbanded, the Jewish parties liquidated, the Hebrew language prohibited as well as learning in kheders and yeshivas, Jewish teachers-melameds persecuted, and synagogues closed. The Soviet government created for the Jews a So-

viet system of education, enlightenment, and culture in Yiddish, without the ethnic traditions and culture.

Jewish sectors were opened in Minsk at the Institute of Belarusian Culture, the V. I. Lenin Library, and the Pedagogy Department of the Belarusian State University. After the annexation of Western Belarus in 1939, the Jewish population grew to 800,000 – 1,000,000 according to different estimates. During World War II most of the Jews of Belarus were annihilated by the Nazis, but no less than 8,500 Jews fought in partisan units. During the postwar anti-Jewish campaign of the “fight against cosmopolites” all Jewish schools and cultural organizations in the state were closed. In the 1940s – 1950s the activities of religious communities were brought to a virtual end. In the 1960s – 1970s Belarus became one of the centers of “anti-Zionist propaganda”. The Jewish population of the state decreased over the postwar period from 150,000 in 1959 to 112,000 in 1989. The main factors of the decrease in population in the 1970s – 1990s were migration processes and assimilation. Up to 1989, Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union was not massive in character. 9,955 Jews left the BSSR between 1979 and 1988.

Since the 1970s the Jews of Minsk have been holding May 9th meetings at the “Yama”, a 1947 memorial to those who died in the ghetto. This memorial is the first one in the USSR to sport the Yiddish inscription “To Jews – Victims of Nazism”. In the 1970s a movement for national dignity and the right to repatriate began in the city: there appeared underground ulpanes for learning Hebrew, history, and traditions. This activity developed especially actively in the mid-1980s. The permission to cross borders freely, given in 1989, led to mass aliyah to Israel. The peak of repatriation from Belarus to Israel was in 1989-1991. Over the three years, 62,389 people left.

According to the census of 1999, the Jewish population of the republic is approximately 28 thousand, while just the charitable organization Chesed serves over 18 thousand elderly Jews. On this basis, even considering age disproportions typical to the modern demographic situation, the roughest calculation should show no less that 50-60 thousand Jews in the state. The largest Jewish population is settled in the capital, Minsk. The other working large communities are in Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Grodno, Bobruisk, Polotzk, Mozyr, Baranovichi, and Pinsk.

The first Jewish organizations appeared in Belarus at the end of the 1980s. The Minsk Society for Jewish Culture (MOEK) was established in 1989; the Jewish community of Belarus was registered officially in 1991,

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joining the Va'ad of the USSR. The most representative Jewish organization currently functioning in the state is the Union of Belarusian Jewish Associations and Communities (UBJAC), headed by Honored Architect of the Republic of Belarus, Lenin Prize winner Leonid Levin. The UBJAC is a member of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, cooperates actively with the World Jewish Congress, the European Jewish Congress, and other international Jewish organizations. It comprises about 100 organizations from 26 Belarusian cities.

The Union's main tasks are to revive the Belarusian Jews as an ethnic and cultural entity, and to aid the study of the ethnic, spiritual, and cultural values of the Jewish people.

Next to the UBJAC, there is the Union of Religious Jewish Congregations of Belarus (URJC), the Judaic Religious Union in the Republic of Belarus (IRO), and the Association of Progressive Judaism. The URJC mainly unites the representatives of the Hassidic Chabad Lubavitch movement, the IRO – the orthodox mitnagdim congregations, and the Association of Progressive Judaism is in charge of the Reform Jews. There is also the Belarusian Association of Concentration Camps and Ghetto Survivors (chair – Mikhail Treyster) and the Belarusian Jewish Union of War Veterans, Partisans, and Underground Fighters (head – Alexander Budnitzkiy).

All the umbrella organizations are supported by the governmental institutions of the Republic of Belarus, the Joint, the Sochnut, and the Israeli Cultural and Informational Center.

The Law “On freedom of religion and religious organizations”, passed in 2002, listed Judaism among the traditional confessions. There are 39 Jewish religious communities currently active in the state. However, restitution of communal property is moving extremely slowly. According to IRO data, only 9 out of the 92 buildings on the territory of Belarus formerly belonging to Jewish communities have been returned to their owners.

The chief rabbi of the UJRC is Tzvi Caplan, appointed at the end of 2006 following some delay on the part of the authorities. At the same time, chief rabbi of Belarus is Sender Uritzky and chief rabbi of the congregations of Progressive Judaism is Grigory Abramovitch. The issue of congregation strength and of the real number of communities participating in each organization is disputable. The IRO claims it controls 14 communities, the UJRC mentions 13. The rest belong to the Association of Progressive Judaism.

Charity is mostly performed through the Chesed system, which began working under the Jewish community and has had the support of the

JDC since 1995. There are now 18 Cheseds in different cities of the state. Virtually all elderly members of the community are engaged by the Chesed system. Extensive social work is being conducted with broken and needy families, as well as families with disabled members. The Mogilev bread factory has been making kosher bread since October 2005.

The UBJAC and the UJRC each has their own educational program. The first Jewish Sunday school opened over 10 years ago by the community, later securing the support of the Israeli Ministry of Education. There are now 19 such schools in the larger cities of Belarus. There are 6 comprehensive Jewish schools in the state: the Jewish classes on the basis of the Minsk № 132 Secondary School (working with the support of Israel's Ministry of Education since 1993), the Lauder Shneur College (works with the support of the Ronald Lauder Foundation), the Jewish Bi-L gymnasium and the Or Avner school in Minsk (opened in September 2005), the Beys Aharon boarding school in Pinsk (working since 2000, since 2007 named after the Nobel Prize winner Simon Kuznetz), and Or Avner schools in Mogilev and Bobruisk. There are 5 Jewish kindergartens in Minsk, Gomel, Grodno, Mogilev, and Vitebsk.

There is a system of summer camps for children and youth. The Hillel youth organization has been functioning in Minsk since 1997.

After the Marc Chagall International Institute for Humanities was closed in 2004, the Jewish Studies department was transferred with its students to the Department of International Relations of Belarusian State University.

Over 30 books have been published on the history and culture of Belarusian Jews. International academic conferences "Jews in the Changing World" were held in 1997 and 1999. In 2000, on the 140th anniversary of S. M. Dubnov, the "Dubnov Readings" were organized. 6 issues of the academic collection on issues of Belarusian Jewish history and culture have been published since 1996. The historical-journalistic magazine *Mishpokha* is being published since 1995; it first appeared as the historical-journalistic almanac of the Vitebsk municipal Jewish community. In 2005, the editors of the *Mishpokha* magazine and the *Mishpokha* Jewish Cultural Center launched a series of books called *Shtetls of Belarus*. The UBJAC began publishing the series *Distinguished Belarusian Jews* – the two first books of the series are already out: *Soviet Jewish Writers of Belarus. Memories and Belarusian Jews in Professional Sports*. In November 2007, an album of photographs and postcards of the late 19th-early 20th centuries, *Synagogues* was published as part of the project "Searching for the

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Lost". A Yiddish-Belarusian dictionary was published in 2008 (compiled by Alexander Astraukh).

Stalinism and the Jews: Belarus, the 1920s by historian Yakov Basin was published in August 2008.

The Jewish History and Culture Museum (director – I. P. Gerasimova) opened in Minsk in April 2002. A Holocaust museum and a museum of Pinsk Jewry are now being created. The 500th anniversary of Jewish presence in the Belarusian Polesye was celebrated in 2006. Festivities were organized in Bobruisk on June 26-27, 2008, in honor of the 500th anniversary of the city's Jewish community and the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel. Many provincial museums hold expositions on the history of the Jewish population of Belarus. A museum of the artist Chaim Soutine was established in the settlement of Smilovichi near Minsk in March 2007. The Jewish Agency and the Hillel student organizations organized youth expeditions over the Jewish sites of Belarus in 2005, 2007, and 2008. In 2001-2006, the folklore researchers and musicologists N. Stepanskaya (who passed away before her time in June 2007) and D. Slepovitch went on several expeditions collecting Jewish musical folklore.

April 2007 saw the First School for Israel Studies organized near Minsk. In September 2007, the Jewish community of Mogilev initiated the cataloging of its ancient Jewish cemetery. The first international academic conference "Belarusian-Jewish Dialogue in the Context of World Culture" was held in Minsk on April 28-30, 2008. On June 23, 2008, the Minsk community house hosted a presentation of the 26-minute-long popular science documentary Six Centuries on Belarusian Soil on the 600-year-old historic and cultural heritage of the Jewish community of Belarus. The film was made at the Brentstar independent film studio in Minsk.

Holocaust studies are given separate attention. The UBJAC has a coordinating committee on studying the Holocaust and perpetuating its memory. The "Lessons of the Holocaust" program is being realized in all the communities of the state since 1999. 30,000 victims' names were determined since 2007 within the project of documenting and immortalizing the names of the Jews who died in the Holocaust in Belarus. The contest of essays "Holocaust. History. Tolerance Lessons" for schoolchildren, students, and teachers is being held since 2007, organized by the Belarusian Holocaust Foundation (chairman – Inna Gerasimova). International Holocaust studies seminars for comprehensive school teachers are held in Brest with the participation of scholars and historians from different countries. Twice a year since 1999, a Memory Week is organized in Grodno by the

local Jewish community, dedicated to the memory of Holocaust victims in Belarus. A Plein Aire dedicated to the Holocaust was held in Pinsk in June 2008.

There have been many monographs, books, and studies on this topic, published recently by the Belarusian Jewish community to worldwide appreciation. Especially notable are such works as: *Jews of Pinsk in 1939–1944* by E. Rosenblatt and I. Yelenskaya, *Belarusian Jewish Genocide Memorials* by M. Botvinnik, a collection of materials edited by R. Tchernoglazova *Judenfrei! Free of Jews!* (a history in documents of the Minsk ghetto), *Belarusian Righteous Among the Nations*, and many others. A bibliography on Holocaust history in Belarus is being published. A method of teaching Holocaust in schools has been developed and is used in a number of regions; regional conferences for schoolchildren are held. In 2003, the leaders of the main Jewish organizations founded a Committee on perpetuating the memory of the victims of the Holocaust in the Republic of Belarus, whose work is funded by the Simon Mark Lazarus Charitable Fund (Great Britain). The first memorial sign this committee placed was a sign in memory of the 1137 executed citizens of Gorodey shtetl. About 30 memorials were erected due to the efforts of the Committee in 2004–2007. However, there are many places remaining unmarked (over 300 as of the end of 2007). A number of communities are publishing Memorial Books.

Festivals of Jewish culture are organized since 1996 as part of the Ethnic Cultures Festival. An annual communal Jewish Book Festival has been taking place since 1997. Since 1998, Bobruisk has been holding the “Bobruyskiye Zhiznelyuby” (the Life-Lovers of Bobruisk) festival of Jewish books. The UBJAC hosts the Izya Kharik Minsk Public Association of Jewish Culture (MOEK). In March 2007 it was announced that the Yiddish group formerly led by the famous Jewish poet Hirsch Reles would be restored.

Chagall Days and Chagall Readings are held annually since 1991. Chagall Yearbooks are published since 2003. The Vitebsk Purimspiel Festival is organized since 1994. Since 2004, the Jewish Cultural Society “Emunah” with the aid of the JDC has been implementing the project “Reviving Jewish Music in Belarus”, wherein the School of Klezmer Music and Yiddish Songs holds its classes. The Shalom Jewish Theatre has been working in Mogilev since 1998. Klezmer bands are performing in Minsk and Lida (Minsker Kapelye, Minsk Klezmer Band, and Shalom). An international cantorial festival has been taking place in Minsk annually since 2005. The

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Emunah society has been holding the republican children's contest "Risuyem Khanuku" (Drawing Chanukah) since 2006. December 2007 saw the first "Chudo. Tvorchestvo!" (Miracle. Art!) Practical Festival for the handicapped at the Minsk Jewish Community House (MEOD).

Since 1992, the UBJAC has been publishing the Aviv newspaper; the IRO publishes the Berega; and the community of Pinsk has been publishing their Carlin newspaper since 2002. The website <http://www.jewishbelarus.org> was launched by the IRO in June 2005. The first issue of the children's literary and artistic almanac Sevivon (Spinning Top) was published by the Union of Belarusian Jewish Associations and Communities, and the Jewish Cultural Society "Emunah" in Minsk in January 2007. The Union of Religious Jewish Congregations began publishing its newspaper Beyakhad (Together). The Jewish community of Grodno came out with the Kadima (Forward) newspaper in June 2008.

A. G. Lukashenko always emphasizes that "Jews will never again be outcasts in this land." He is the only official figure to have mentioned the role of the Jewish partisan units in the years of World War II. The opening on July 10, 2001, of the "Minskoye Getto" (Minsk Ghetto) memorial to victims of the Holocaust became a grand event not just for the Jewish community, but for the whole state; the President and parliament members were in attendance. Solemn events were held at the "Yama" common grave to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liquidation of the Minsk Ghetto in 2003. Several memorials to Holocaust victims were funded fully or in part by local authorities. There is a Jerusalem Street in the Belarusian capital; the Minsk municipal deputy council decided to rename the Mebelnyi lane after Mikhail Gebelev, one of the underground leaders of the Minsk ghetto, installing a memorial plaque in his honor. On January 15, 2008, the National Bank of Belarus put into circulation memorial coins "Z. Azgur. Year 100", dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Belarusian sculptor of Jewish descent, Zair Azgur. In March 2008, the National Tourism Agency of Belarus developed the tour "Executed Stars. The Story of the Minsk Ghetto".

Evidently, in the half-isolated conditions of Belarus the government needs to exert considerable effort to prevent scandals based on anti-Semitism. However, in order to avoid putting to doubt Lukashenko's claim of lack of anti-Semitism in the state, court authorities often proclaim openly provocative works to be academic writing, i.e., non-indictable. Requests by Jewish public organizations are either left unanswered, or the facts they refer to are qualified as simple hooliganism. Investigation of the November

2006 desecration of the memorial to prisoners of the Minsk ghetto, which had been initiated after insistent demands from Jewish organizations and a number of foreign embassies, was suspended in March 2007.

It is difficult to discuss the real level of anti-Semitism and xenophobia in the republic for lack of adequate sociological poll data; the assessments of independent experts differ. There are radical right-wing organizations and a skinhead movement in Belarus. Certain groups of Belarusian nationalist orientation from the opposition give their dues to anti-Semitism as well. There are regular reports of desecration of cemeteries, memorials, and synagogues; scandals break out because of demolished synagogue buildings, construction attempts at Jewish cemetery sites, etc. The Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to renew the mission of the American Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union.

In January 2006 the mass media of Mogilev promoted a campaign against the local bread factory baking kosher bread. In the same city in the same year the regional prosecutor officially reprimanded the teacher of the local Jewish kindergarten's music group for violating the Law "On freedom of conscience and religious organizations" by organizing a Purim celebration. In lieu of arguments, the prosecutor attached to the letter he sent to educational authorities several copies of pages from the notorious book by the priest A. Kurayev *How One Is Made Anti-Semitic*. There has been a significant increase in the number of anti-Semitic incidents. Graves were desecrated at the Borisov cemetery in July 2007. 15 graves were desecrated at the Jewish cemetery in Bobruisk on the night of October 11, 2007; shortly before that, a swastika and offensive graffiti appeared on the gate of the cemetery. In January 2008 it became known that the Vitebsk branch of the Russkoye Natsionalnoye Yedinstvo (Russian National Unity) had threatened the local Jewish human rights activist Boris Khamayda and the newspaper *Kuryer Iz Vitebska* (Courier from Vitebsk) which had published a call for donations toward building a memorial to Holocaust victims in the Vitebsk district. A memorial to ghetto prisoners was defiled in Brest on February 11, 2008. In April 2008, the memorial to the prisoners of the ghetto of Slutsk was defiled. Swastikas were drawn on the premises of the Jewish community house and the building of a former synagogue in Borisov on May 29, 2008.

The most famous incident of this sort was caused by the words of the Belarusian President. At a press-conference on October 12, 2007, Alexander Lukashenko claimed that the problems of the city of Bobruisk are directly linked to the actions of the Jews. "If you have been to Bobruisk, you have seen the state of the city. It was frightening to enter, such

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a pigsty. It was a Jewish city mostly, you know how Jews treat the places they live,” said President Lukashenko. These remarks led to an international scandal, pacified only at the end of the month after a speech by the Belarusian leader in quite the opposite tone. Meeting with the participants of the international academic conference “Dialogue between Christianity and Islam under Circumstances of Globalization” on October 26, 2007, the President noted that there was no such thing as “the Jewish question” in Belarus. “The history of our land is very closely linked to the Jews. In the years of the Russian Empire, the Belarusian lands were inside the Jewish Pale of Settlement, therefore the ethnicities here are so interwoven that it would be simply foolish to think that the Belarusians are against Jews,” A. Lukashenko said. He also emphasized that “it is only enemies and foes that speak about anti-Semitism in Belarus. It is probable that A. Lukashenko’s meeting with entrepreneur L. Levayev, who is also the chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the CIS, was also organized for the purpose of “hushing up” the scandal.

There are cases of suppression of Jewish history in official publications on the history of certain regions of Belarus.

The services of the Jewish underground which fought the Nazis are also not mentioned (the heroic deed of Masha Bruskina, publicly executed by the Nazis in 1941, was only recognized in July 2008). It is known that among the officials of the presidential structures there is a group of “ultra-patriots”, led by journalist E. Skobelev, editor of the presidential bulletin, who in 2005 published Stalin’s Testament, a book with a strong “anti-Zionist” component. At the same time, the government endeavors to restrain the most “colorful” episodes of national radical activity.

As for the refusal on the part of officials to satisfy the demands of the Jewish communities for restitution, opening schools, etc., this is perhaps more a reflection of the state policy of protection for the Orthodox Church, which takes a special position when church shops store openly anti-Semitic literature. The Jewish organizations’ resistance to anti-Semitism usually takes the form of complaints to the authorities and appeals to foreign organizations, as well as legal action, this latter probably being the most effective. Over the recent years the Jewish organizations of the state won several trials against radical nationalists. The individual who had desecrated graves in Borisov in July 2007 was sentenced in April 2008, this being the first such event.

Diplomatic relations with Israel were established in 1992. In 2003-2005 the Israeli embassy in Minsk was closed as part of Israel’s campaign

to economize state budget resources. In response, Belarus de facto decreased the level of its representation in the State of Israel in January 2004 by leaving a charge d'affaires ad interim in charge of the embassy. The relations between the two states were also overshadowed by the rumors of Belarus selling modern weaponry to radical Arabic regimes. The conflict was settled in January 2005, when the Israeli embassy in Minsk recommenced its work (ambassador since 2008 – Eddie Shapira). The consular office opened in June 2005. In May 2006 Belarus also appointed its ambassador to Israel. Due to A. Lukashenko's anti-Semitic remarks, the Israeli ambassador was temporarily recalled in October 2007. It was only after a meeting at the end of October 2007 with A. Lukashenko's personal envoy, editor of the *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* (Soviet Belarus) newspaper P. Yakubovitch, where it was stated that the President's words were "humorous, not serious", "not representing his real position towards Jews", the Israelis agreed to consider the incident settled.

The Israeli-Belarusian League of Inter-Parliamentary Friendship is headed by member of Belarus' National Assembly O. Velitchko. An All-Israeli Union of Belarusian Expatriates also exists, presided over by Mikhail Alshansky.

In September 2005 a memorial plaque in honor of Prime Minister of Israel M. Begin was ceremoniously unveiled in Brest. January and February 2007 saw the "Days of Israeli Books" and an exhibition of Israeli photographers' work in Minsk. On February 1, 2007, there was a presentation in Minsk of the book *Bus Driver Who Wanted to Become God* by Israeli writer E. Keret. Israel was the honorary guest at the 15th international book exhibition and fair "Books of Belarus 2008" which was held in Minsk in February 2008. May 2008 saw celebrations in Minsk in honor of the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, as well as a film program "New Israeli Cinema".

Chairman of the EAJC General Council Yosif Zissels took part in the opening of the memorial to Jews who died in the Shtetl ghetto on September 6, 2007.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF GEORGIA

The Republic of Georgia is the legal successor of the Georgian SSR. The head of the state is its president (Mikhail Saakashvili since January 2004).

The area of the state is 69,000 kilometers square; its population – 4.7 million (the central government does not have control over a significant part of the former Georgian autonomies – Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are unrecognized republics).

According to the Kartlis Tzkhovreba (Kartli's Life) chronicle, the first Jews arrived in Georgia after Jerusalem was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (586 B.C.). The unique ethnic group of Georgian Jews (Hebraeli) who spoke a Jewish ethnolect of the Georgian language and were in serfdom in feudal Georgia, worked mainly in agriculture, as well as weaving and dyeing; part peddled and dealt in other seasonal work. Ashkenazi Jews appeared in Georgia after Russia annexed the Georgian Kingdom in 1801. After the abolition of serfdom in Georgia in 1864–1871, Jews began moving to cities (Tbilisi, Akhaltzikhe, Kutaisi, etc.) and dealing in commerce and trade – shoemaking, hat-making, tanning, etc. According to the census of 1897, the Jewish population of Georgia was approximately 6000 people.

In the 1920s, kolkhozes and artels of Georgian Jews were formed. The attempts in 1928 to move part of the Georgian Jews to Birobidzhan and certain regions of the Crimea failed. In the 1930s, most of the Jewish kolkhozes and artels were merged with non-Jewish ones. In the 1930s-1940s the Jewish intelligentsia of Georgia was virtually all repressed, all Jewish cultural and educational institutions were closed. According to the census of 1926, there were over 21,000 Georgian Jews. The census of 1959 shows this number increasing to 35,000; by 1970 it was 43,000. In reality there were even more Jews in Georgia. Despite mass emigration to Israel in the 1970s, when over 30,000 left, and the 1989 census showing only 14,310 Georgian Jews, other 30,000 left Georgia in the 1990s.

The only Jewish public institution existing more or less freely in late-Soviet Georgia was the synagogue. About a third of all Jewish religious

communities registered in the USSR were located in Georgia. The Jews of Georgia were the main donors for the needs of Jewish religious communities without their republic.

When several Georgian Jewish families applied for permissions to emigrate in 1968, the open struggle of Soviet Jews for aliyah began. The first legal Jewish organization – the Cultural Center of Georgian Jews (KCEG) – was established in 1987. Another one opened in 1988 – the Association of Georgian-Jewish Interaction by the Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR. In the following year a Sochnut office appeared in Georgia – the first one in the USSR.

According to different estimates, there are 8 to 12 thousand Jews currently living in Georgia. Along with Georgian Jews, there are some Ashkenazis (up to 2 or 3 thousand people), mainly concentrated in Tbilisi. About two thirds of the Georgian Jews live in Tbilisi, the rest – in Kutaisi, Gori, Batumi, Oni, Akhaltzikhe, Rustavi, and Kareli. Many communities, still existing at the end of the 1980s, are now extinct. A significant part of the Jews of Georgia emigrated to Russia in the 1990s, settling mostly in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where they founded separate Georgian Jewish religious communities. The main reason for emigration was the economical and political crisis, continuing in Georgia since 1991. Virtually all the Jews of South Ossetia left or were evacuated by the Sochnut in 1991-1992. There are about 200 Jews living in the capital of Abkhazia, Sukhumi: most of them Ashkenazi, Bukharian Jews, and Krymchaks. Emigration is still continuing, but at a lesser extent than in the 1990s. As a result of the “five-day war” in South Ossetia which broke out in August 2008, the Jewish population of Tzkhinvali (the capital of this unrecognized republic) became fully extinct as most of it (about 20 people) escaped to Russia. Moreover, the Jewish quarter of Tzkhinvali was destroyed for the second time. Most of the Jewish community of Gori left the city in fear of the approaching Russian troops; part of them then emigrated to Israel.

The main umbrella organization for the Georgian Jews is the World Congress of Georgian Jews, established in January 2003 (president – M. G. Mirilashvili), a collective member of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress. Its co-chairmen are Professor Shalva Mardi (Switzerland), politician Shabtai Tzur (Israel), and writer Guram Batiashvili (Georgia). There is a Georgian Maccabi office (G. Paatashvili), and a Maccabi basketball club (J. Khukhashvili). In 1998, a discussion club called 26 Centuries was formed, organizing regular members’ meetings of the Jewish community of Georgia. A local office of the international student organization Hillel is functioning

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in Tbilisi; the charitable organization Chesed-Eliyahu (R. Shatashvili) has branches in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Gori, Batumi, Kutaisi, and Oni. The Joint (Sergey Vlasov) also finances the republic's Jewish Cultural and Educational Foundation (E. Berkovitch). In the winter of 2006, the Federation of Jewish Communities of the FSU announced the creation of a special charitable foundation to aid elderly Georgian Jews. Also existing are: the World Association of Georgian-Jewish women (president – Eva Babalashvili-Khukhashvili), the Association of Jewish Women in Georgia Miriam (Riva Krupnik), and the women's organization Leah, led by M. Solomonishvili.

There are two Jewish schools and a kindergarten of the Or Avner system in the state, as well as the Shalom Sesame kindergarten with the Jewish Cultural and Educational Foundation. A National University of Jewish Culture has been working in the state since the late 1990s. Summer camps are organized with the support of the Joint and the Sochnut.

Also supported by the Joint and the Sochnut are three Jewish newspapers: the Georgian-language Menorah since 1993 (editor G. Batiashvili); the Russian-language Shalom since 1992 (editor L. Samovski); and 26 Vekov (26 Centuries) since 1998, also in Russian (editor G. Namtalashvili). There has been a regular communal Jewish book festival in Tbilisi since 1996.

There are religious communities in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, and Gori. Chief Rabbi of Georgia is Rabbi Ariel Levine. The Chabad movement is represented in Georgia by Rabbi Abraham Mikhelashvili. A cooperation agreement was signed between the Jewish community of Georgia and the Georgian Orthodox Church in 2001, wherein the GOC accepted Judaism as one of Georgia's traditional religions. In November 2005 a postal stamp was issued in Georgia with the portrait of Rabbi Abraham Khvoles, the rabbi of Tzkhinvali for many years. In December 2005, a Chabad-Lubavitch yeshiva opened in Tbilisi. A mikvah was installed in Tbilisi in December 2006. In May 2007, part of the produce of the Kazbegi enterprise (Rustavi, Georgia) received a kashrut certificate from the kashrut department of the Chief Rabbinate of Russia. In the beginning of 2008, the first batch of kosher wine produced at the Alaverdi factory in Chumlaki, Gurjaan region, came into the market.

There is a Society of Georgian-Israeli Friendship (president – academician R. Metreveli, vice-president – G. Batiashvili), whose branch in western Georgia (Prof. A. Nikoleishvili) publishes a magazine.

The notion of Georgia's tolerance to Jews has become part of the state's public image and is constantly emphasized by authorities at all

levels. 1998 saw very pompous celebrations of the conditional 2600th anniversary of Jewish presence in Georgia. Eduard Shevardnadze, who headed the state in 1992–2003, regularly proclaimed friendship between Georgians and Jews and attended various events organized by the Jewish community. The current president, Mikhail Saakashvili, adheres to the same tactic. In addition to this, it is now constantly emphasized that the fates of the two nations are related as they are both oppressed by hostile neighbors. Moreover, Georgia is attempting to have international Jewish organizations recognize the exile of Georgians from Abkhazia in 1993 as genocide similar to the Holocaust. In December 2006, M. Saakashvili promised to return Jews to Abkhazia and to Tzkhinvali – the center of the unrecognized South Ossetia, which according to President Saakashvili used to be a Georgian-Jewish city. The leaders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia also use “the Jewish question” to support the positive images of their states. May 2007 saw the registration in Tzkhinvali of the Shalom center of Jewish cultural revival; South Ossetia representatives reminded on a regular basis that during the 1992 assault on Tzkhinvali the Georgian artillery completely destroyed the Jewish quarter. After the “five-day war” the leader of South Ossetia E. Kokoity promised to restore the Jewish quarter in Tzkhinvali.

In December 2006 President M. Saakashvili personally lit a Chanukah candle in the Choral Synagogue of Tbilisi. Under G. Batiashvili’s initiative, the mayor’s office of Tbilisi decided to rename two streets in the historical part of the capital after the kings David and Solomon in July 2006.

EAJC General Council Chairman Yosif Zissels took part in Mikhail Saakashvili’s inauguration ceremony. On October 28, 2004, the President of Georgia received an EAJC delegation led by EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich. The meeting was dedicated to having the state participate more actively in the international interethnic and inter-confessional dialogue under the patronage of the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev.

The joint diplomatic mission of the EAJC (led by Alexander Mashkevich) and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (led by Malcolm Hoenlein) was in Tbilisi on February 13-17. The delegation met with President Mikhail Saakashvili, Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze, Prime Minister Lado Gurgenedze, Patriarch of Georgia Ilia II, U.S. Ambassador to Georgia John Teft, Minister of Conflict Resolution Temur Yakobashvili, and other ministers.

In August and September, aid was organized for the refugees in the armed conflict area in the Caucasus. \$70,000 was allocated for aid. Yo-

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sif Zissels was made responsible for coordinating the humanitarian aid. A Refugee Aid Committee was formed, which kept political neutrality, took no sides in the conflict, and only got involved in solving humanitarian tasks. Minister of refugees and accommodation Tamar Martiashvili on behalf of the Georgian government thanked EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich and his vice-presidents for the humanitarian aid provided for the refugees since the beginning of the war conflict. Over 250 refugees were aided altogether.

Besides aiding the refugees, the EAJC is planning to financially support the repair and reconstruction of the partially destroyed synagogue in Tbilisi. The repairs began in mid-September 2008.

The Jewish House in Tbilisi, opened in 2003, is home to regular meetings of people from various diasporas. Unfortunately, the Joint closed the House in March 2008 on the pretext of insufficient security against terrorist attacks.

During the 2007 presidential campaign, the Jewish descent of one of M. Saakashvili's rivals, entrepreneur A. (B.) Patarkatzishvili (1955–2008), was repeatedly alleged by the government; his followers were accused of having “sold out to the zhid” several times. In April–early May 2008, the Jewish cemetery in Batumi was desecrated twice. The popular newspaper *Asaval-Dasavali* kept publishing anti-Semitic materials (by Count A. Cherep-Spiridovich and G. Klimov). These publications were put a stop to once the writer and EAJC General Council member G. Batiashvili publicly interfered.

Diplomatic relations between Israel and Georgia were established in 1992. Itzhak Gerberg has been the Ambassador of Israel to the Republic of Georgia since 2008. Over the 1990s E. Shevardnadze paid several visits to Israel. Mikhail Saakashvili visited Israel in 2004, 2006, and 2008. President of Israel Moshe Katzav came with an official visit to Georgia in 2000. The same year saw the official revocation for Georgia of the Jackson-Vanik amendment. In October 2004, the one hundredth anniversary of the Great Synagogue in Tbilisi merited a grand celebration.

A Georgian-Israeli Chamber of Commerce exists, presided over by Itzik Moshe. There are Israeli companies working in Georgia. In March 2008, the Georgian Jewish community representatives in Israel presented the Federal Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel with a petition to assist the admission of Georgia to NATO.

In December 2005, M. Saakashvili announced he was ready to return Georgian citizenship to Jews of Georgian descent living in Israel, whose

population is estimated up to 80,000 (previously, citizenship was re-granted to about 200 Georgian Jews by special presidential edicts). Somewhat earlier, entry visas to Georgia were waived for Israeli citizens. A cooperation agreement was reached between the Georgian branch of the Red Cross and the Israeli Red Star of David (Magen David Adom) in December 2006. Part of Israel's 60th anniversary celebrations in Tbilisi in May 2008 included a Week of Israel, featuring the business forum Building Together, building a Georgian-Israeli Friendship Lane, a festive night at Tbilisi's main synagogue, and a presentation of an Israel Corner at the Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

In recent years Georgia has been an active purchaser of Israeli weaponry (such contacts possibly simplified by the fact that Minister of Defense since 2006 D. Kezerashvili had made aliyah in the early 1990s and lived for several years in Israel). However, in the summer of 2008 Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs froze all such interactions in order to prevent deterioration of relations with Russia.

As far back as the Soviet Period the Tbilisi State University was one of the centers for Jewish Studies with such renowned semitologists as N. I. Babalishvili and K. Tzereteli. A Center for Jewish Education was established at the University in 2000, led by Professor G. Lordkipanidze. There is also a Jewish Studies office at the History of Culture Department of the TSU, headed by D. Ajiashvili. Hebrew is taught at the Oriental Studies branch of the Philology Department of the Teachers' Training Institute.

The film, "If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem!" came out in 2006; it was dedicated to the struggle of the Georgian Jews for repatriation to Israel (screenplay by Guram Batiashvili, directed by Merab Kokochashvili). *Man from Babylon*, a novel by Guram Batiashvili, dedicated to the life of Jews in Georgia in the 12th century, was published in 2008.

In order to preserve and restore monuments of Jewish culture, the Association to Protect Synagogues, Jewish Cemeteries, and Cultural Monuments was established in 2003 with the support of the Georgian government.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF KAZAKHSTAN

The Republic of Kazakhstan is the legal successor of the Kazakh SSR. Its area is 2717,3 thousand square kilometers. Its population is 15.7 million.

The head of the state is the President, appointed by general election. Current president (since 1991) is Nursultan Nazarbayev (First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party in 1989-1991, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Kazakh SSR in 1990-1991). Legislative authority is implemented by the bicameral parliament, consisting of the Senate and the Majilis.

Scholars hold that the first Jews arrived to the territory of modern Kazakhstan in the Middle ages as merchants travelling the Silk Road. Jewish presence is known in the city of Turkestan, there are mentions of a synagogue there in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the first written mentions of the – Ashkenazi – Jewish community of Kazakhstan belongs to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It says that there were 12 people “of the Judaic faith” in the Semipalatinsk region in 1825.

In Soviet times the legal Jewish institutional setting consisted of the functioning synagogues in Alma-Ata, Chimkent, Turkestan, and Kyzylorda.

The Jewish population grew significantly in the 1930s and 1940s by migration from the former Pale of Settlement and mass evacuation in 1941-1942, when over 100,000 Jews from the European part of the USSR were brought to Kazakhstan. While there were 3,600 Jews living in Kazakhstan in 1936, in 1939 the number grew to 19,200; and further to 28,000 in 1959. According to censuses, the Jewish population decreased gradually: there were 27,700 Jews there in 1970, 23,500 in 1979, and 19,900 in 1989. This increase was perhaps due to assimilation, emigration, and a low birth rate. Approximately 20,000 people emigrated from Kazakhstan to Israel in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Currently the Jewish population is difficult to measure exactly; according to the Jewish organizations’ own data, there are over 50,000 Jews living in Kazakhstan (11,000 of those in Almaty). Most of the Kazakh Jews live in the larger cities where 13 community centers have been opened.

The first legal Jewish organizations were established in Kazakhstan in 1989. The regional center of the USSR Va'ad was formed in 1990, going on to play a significant part in the creation of the republic's Jewish community in the early 1990s.

Initially the part of the "front" organization was played by the Association of Jewish National Organizations of Kazakhstan, Mitzva (founded in 1992, President – Alexander Baron). In 1996 the Association supported the arrival of the Jewish charity organization Chesed, working with the aid of the JDC. In a state whose centers of population are far away from each other, the program Chesed on Wheels is especially important, involving lonely Jews and small groups into Jewish life. The first Jewish community center in Kazakhstan, JCC Rimon, was founded in 1998. Currently Cheseds and JCCs work with 20,000 Jews in over 160 settlements in Kazakhstan. The Jewish Congress of Kazakhstan (President – Alexander Mashkevich) was established in 1999. Today the Congress collaborates with 15 Jewish cultural unions, 13 charitable Chesed organizations, and 12 Jewish community centers. In 2002, the JCK became one of the founders of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, whose elected President is also Alexander Mashkevich. The followers of the FJC of the CIS, united into the Association of Jewish Communities of Kazakhstan and comprising 27 communities, are headed by Galina Roytburg; their spiritual leader is Rabbi Menachem-Mendel Gershovich. There are also offices of the Sochnut and the JDC.

Three Jewish schools are functioning in Kazakhstan on funding by the Or Avner Foundation. Another 11 are supported by local communities. Summer camps are organized for children and teenagers with the aid of the Sochnut and the Or Avner Foundation.

The leading cultural organization is the State Jewish Library (director – Galina Korobkina) with branches in 16 cities, established in 1997, functioning with the support of the Mitzva Association. The Library is equipped with a digital book catalogue; it holds regular video- and web-conferences with readers, and online meetings with writers and poets. In recent years the library has been receiving the support of the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund.

18 Jewish cultural centers function in the state; regular Jewish book festivals are held. The Jewish Congress of Kazakhstan and the Library have been holding an annual Jewish Book Festival since 1999. In 2007 it was dedicated to the Library's tenth anniversary. A travelling Community Book Festival is held for the smaller communities. Youth clubs are working successfully; there are art centers for children, musical and literary clubs, and Hebrew and Yiddish study groups in Karaganda, Astana, and Ust-Kamenogorsk.

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The annual International Festival of Jewish Children and Youth Art, Freylekhe Kinder, has been taking place in Karaganda since 2005, organized by the Mitzva Association with the support of the American Joint Distribution Center. It was a natural reaction to the energetic development of the creative programs in the local Jewish community centers. A drawing contest for children, Pesach, was initiated by the Mitzva Association, the Sochnut, and the JCC Rimon in April 2007; 50 works by children aged 6 to 16 were submitted.

There are 4 Jewish newspapers and a magazine in Kazakhstan. The Shalom newspaper and the Kazakhstan Jewish Community Bulletin, Davar, are the most popular ones.

There are approximately 10 functioning synagogues in the state (in Aktoba, Almaty, Astana, Karaganda, Kyzylorda, Kostanay, Pavlodar, and Shymkent), most of them built or renovated with the support of the JCC and the EAJC. The cornerstone of a future synagogue was laid in September 2006 in Ust-Kamenogorsk. The Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel Yona Metzger took part in the festivities along with Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan Yeshaya Cohen, President of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress Alexander Mashkevich, and President of Mitzva Association of Jewish National Organizations of Kazakhstan Alexander Baron. The construction of the synagogue is sponsored by Belgian of Jewish descent, Sylvain Geller. The leaders of the state's Jewish organization and Ust-Kamenogorsk community members happily noted that the construction of the new synagogue is another step on Kazakhstan's way to tolerance. Euro-Asian Jewish Congress President Alexander Mashkevich presented the local community with a unique Torah scroll during the celebrations. The first kosher restaurant in the state opened in Almaty in March 2008.

The Euro-Asian Rabbinical Council was established at a conference in Almaty in 2002.

The local Jewish community takes an active part in the inter-confessional dialogue under the patronage of President Nazarbayev. The main goal of this policy is to normalize the relations between the traditional confessions. Several inter-confessional forums took place in Almaty and Astana in 2002-2003. Chief Rabbis of Israel Y. Metzger and S. Amar pay regular visits to the republic. After the most representative of the events, the Congress of World and Traditional National Religions took place in September 2003, Rabbi Y. Metzger initiated the decision to hold such conventions regularly and to create an executive body for work between the conventions. On September 7, 2004, in Astana Yona Metzger and the American Jewish philanthropist Ronald Lauder, recently elected President of the World Jewish Congress,

awarded the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev with the International Maimonides Award for his input into the dialogue between civilizations. On September 12, 2006, EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich and EAJC General Council Chairman Josef Zissels participated in the Second Congress of World and Traditional National Religions which took place in Astana under the chairmanship of the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. During the Congress, the President of the EAJC met with Chief Rabbis of Israel Yona Metzger and Shlomo Amar, as well as many hierarchs of other world religions.

As part of the inter-confessional dialogue policy, a Palace of Nations was erected in Astana, to hold a mosque, a church, a synagogue, a Buddhist temple, the Assembly of Nations of Kazakhstan, as well as all the national cultural centers. A Civilizations University is intended to be established in this center, preparing specialists in the history of world religions and cultures.

In July 2007, Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan Yeshaya Cohen spoke out in favor of the rescission of the Jackson-Vanik amendment for Kazakhstan.

The Mitzva Association and the Cheseds of Kazakhstan have initiated an annual (since 2005) state drawing contest for children, “We Are for Tolerance”, a literary contest “Tolerance – Lessons in History”, and a conference of the same name.

Diplomatic relations with Israel were established in 1992 (Ambassador since 2008 – Israel Mey-Ami, previously in the same position in 1996-2002). President Nazarbayev has paid official visits to Israel in 1995 and 2000. There is a group of inter-parliamentary friendship between Kazakhstan and Israel (chairman – Knesset member Amnon Cohen). Bilateral trade reached over \$1 billion in the mid-2000s. A Kazakh-Israeli intergovernmental committee on commercial and economical collaboration has been established. Hundreds of Kazakh medical doctors have been trained and re-trained in Israeli educational institutions. The Kazakh government takes interest in the Israeli repatriate absorption process, seeking to apply it in Kazakhstan. Israeli Cinema Days have been taking place in Almaty annually since 2005. There were festivities in Almaty and Astana in May 2008 in honor of the 60th anniversary of the state of Israel. EAJC President Alexander Mashkevich took an active part in the celebrations in Astana.

The collection ‘Jews of Kazakhstan: History, Religion, Culture’ has been published since 2001 with the aid of the JDC. Conferences “On the History of the Jews of Kazakhstan” took place in Almaty in November 2002, 2004, and 2006; their materials were published in the third, fourth, and fifth editions of the collection. In 2004, I. Grinberg’s ‘Jews in Almaty: A Short

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Historical Outline' was published. Yiddish has been an obligatory course at the Abylai khan Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages since September 2004. A fictionalized biography of I. Babel by the German historian and journalist, R. Krumm, was published in May 2006. In 2008, I. Grinberg together with the State Archive of Kazakhstan published the collection 'Evacuation to Kazakhstan. From the History of the Evacuation of the Population of the Western Regions of the USSR to Kazakhstan in 1941–1942', and an exhibition of the same name opened in Almaty in May 2008.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF KYRGYZSTAN

The Republic of Kyrgyzstan is an independent state which is the legal successor of the Kyrgyz SSR. The Republic's first Constitution was adopted on May 5, 1993. The head of state is the President (Kurmanbek Bakiyev since July 2005). Legislative authority is implemented by the bicameral parliament, Zhogorku Kenesh.

The state capital is Bishkek. The area is 199.9 thousand square kilometers, the population is 5.276 million.

There is evidence of the first Jews settling in Kirgizia about a thousand years ago, but the Jewish community began forming in the second half of the 19th century as Central Asia was annexed by the Russian Empire, and both European and Bukharian Jews came to settle on the territory of today's Kyrgyzstan. Ashkenazi Jews preferred the northern part of the republic, while Sephardic Jews settled in the south. In the 20th century the Bukharian Jews began migrating gradually to the northern regions.

The number of Ashkenazi Jews grew in the 1930-1940s, primarily with exiles and the evacuated. The number of evacuated Jews during the Great Patriotic War is estimated to 26 thousand. By the end of the '70s the Jewish population of the Republic had shrunk to 7.2 thousand. Along with European and Bukharian Jews, small groups of Karaites, Krymchaks, and Caucasus Jews lived in Kyrgyzstan, all suffering to some extent from Stalinist repression.

After the Jewish organizations were eliminated and most local Bukharian-Jewish intellectuals destroyed in the 1920-1930s, the only remaining institutional setting of the Jewish community was the synagogue, established in 1941.

Over 5 thousand Jews have emigrated from the country since the early 1990s.

Currently there are about 1,500 Jews living in the Republic (mostly in Bishkek). Smaller groups reside in the cities of Osh, Kyzyl-Kiya, Karakol, Tokmak, and Kant.

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The Kyrgyz Society of Jewish culture, Menorah, was founded in 1989 (headed since 1996 by Boris Shapiro). Menorah participates actively in the Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, founded in 1994, and was among the initiators of the Russian Language in the FSU Nations' Society Congress which took place in Bishkek in March 2004.

The charitable foundation Chessed Tiqva (director – R. Fish) was founded in Bishkek in 1997 with the aid of the JDC. It supports elderly Jews, and its JCC has over 20 programs for various age groups, including children and youth. Chessed Tiqva holds an educational seminar out of town once a year. “Tolerance – Lessons of the Holocaust” is another project Menorah, Chessed, and the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education have been carrying out with the aid of the EAJC since 2004.

Since 2001, the only synagogue in the state – the one in Bishkek – has been headed by Chief Rabbi of Kyrgyz Republic, Arye Reichman. A kindergarten was founded by the synagogue in December 2004 with the aid of the Or-Avner Foundation. In May 2006, the synagogue was visited by an EAJC delegation with EAJC president A. Mashkevich at the helm, and the intended construction of a Beyt-Rachel synagogue in Bishkek was announced.

The Ch. Chochstein Etz Chayim Jewish secondary school in the state capital, with instruction in Hebrew and Russian, is headed by V. Kritzman. A Jewish Sunday school also works on its premises. May 2006 saw an ORT technology center open in the Etz Chayim School.

A community Jewish book festival has been taking place in Bishkek annually since 1997. There are two Jewish youth clubs in the city – No’ar and Perakh. The communal newspaper Ma’ayan, published since 1996, is edited by L. Zelitchenko.

There is a Jewish Culture Study Center (JCSC) at the Kyrgyz-Russian University, headed by A. Katsev. *Jews in Kyrgyzstan* by A. Yarkov was published in 2001 by the Menorah Society and the Chessed Tiqva Foundation.

Anti-Semitic tendencies in the state are largely generated by radical Islamists (the Khizb-ut-Tahrir party and others). Anti-Semitic rhetoric was used against political opponents in 2006.

Diplomatic relations with Israel were established in 1992 with Russia representing the interests of Kirgizia in Israel first. Currently the ambassador of Israel to the Kyrgyz Republic is E. Gol, representing Israel also in Armenia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. A Kyrgyz-Israeli Friendship Society operates in Bishkek.

The Jackson–Vanik Amendment was rescinded for Kirgizstan in 2000.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF MOLDOVA

The Republic of Moldova is the legal successor of the Moldavian SSR. Its area is 33,371 kilometers square (including the unrecognized Transnistrian Moldovan Republic, occupying areas on the left bank of the Dniester and the district of Bendery city). Its population is about 4 million people. The head of the state is the president (Vladimir Voronin since April 2001).

The first Jewish communities appeared on the territory of today's Moldova in the 14th century. By the end of the 18th century numerous Ashkenazi Jewish settlements had appeared in the state, their inhabitants mostly dealing in commerce. In 1812, the territory between the Prut and the Dniester was annexed by Russia and named the province of Bessarabia. In 1917-1918 this territory proclaimed itself the independent democratic Moldavian Republic which joined Romania in 1918. In 1940, the territory of Bessarabia joined the USSR as the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, situated mostly within the former province, except Budjak in the south and Khotin district in the north, belonging to the Ukrainian SSR. In 1991 the Moldavian SSR declared its independence and took the name of the Republic of Moldova. Out of all the regions of the former USSR, this one had the highest density of Jewish population, estimated at 10.6% of all its population.

According to the first general census in 1897, there were 228.2 thousand Jews living in the province of Bessarabia. After the USSR annexation in 1940 there were about 350,000 Jews in Moldova. 263 thousand Jews, both local and brought in from other Eastern European states, were killed in the Holocaust in Moldova and the so-called Transnistria – the territory between the Dniester and the Southern Bug.

In 1959 there were 95,100 Jews residing in the Moldavian SSR, with Yiddish as the native language for more than half of them. According to Soviet censuses, the Jewish population of the republic decreased consistently since 1970: there were 98,000 Jews in 1970, 80,042 – in 1979, and 65,672 – in 1989.

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About 50,000 Jews left the state during the period of mass emigration in the late 1980s – early 1990s. A significant part of the Bendery Jewish community (about 1,400 people) was evacuated to Israel in the heat of the Transnistria conflict in June 1992. Currently the Jewish population of Moldova is estimated at 15,000 with 7,000 living in Chisinau, 1,000 – in Beltsy, and about 2,000 in the unrecognized Moldovan Republic of Transnistria.

The first Jewish organizations appeared in the republic in 1989. In December that year, the Moldovan Society for Jewish Culture (MOEK) joined the Va'ad of the USSR. Distinguished Moldovan architect S. Shoykhet, leader of the MOEK for many years, was decorated with the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress order “For Services to the Jewish Nation” in 2005.

In the early 1990s a Jewish Agency for Israel (Sochnut) office was opened in the state (director – Paula Lam-Khayim). A branch of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has functioned in Moldova since 1993. It supports a Chesed system with approximately 4,500 people in its care. For several years there was a conflict between the Joint and the Jewish organizations of Moldova for the premises of the community center in Chisinau which the Joint had begun renting out. The case went to court over the right of possession of the historic part of the community center; the Joint lost the case. Simultaneously, it liquidated Cheseds in Sorooca, Orhei, Dubăsari, and Bendery, citing small client base.

Among the republican umbrella organizations are: the Association of Jewish Communities and Organizations of Moldova (established in 1997, leaders since June 2007 – businessmen Alexander Pinchevsky and Alexander Bilinkis) and the Jewish Congress of Moldova, created in June 2003 by Moldovan Jewish entrepreneurs (president since June 2006 – A. Bilinkis). A joint administration for the AJCOM and the JCM was established in September 2007 (general director – Roman Aronov). Both organizations are members of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress. A field session of the General Council of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress took place in Chisinau in September 2005. In order to describe and renovate the Jewish cemeteries of the state, the Dor le-Dor Charitable Foundation was established in the spring of 2003; it has invested \$200,000 just into the Jewish cemetery of Chisinau. Unfortunately, in the fall of 2006 the officials of the Chisinau mayor’s office pressured the foundation to leave the Jewish cemetery. As a result, in March 2007 several graves were desecrated.

Also working in Moldova: the Republican Union of Jewish Great Patriotic War Veterans (leader – M. M. Bekker), the Association of Jew-

ish Great Patriotic War Refugees (chairman – M. R. Rabinovitch), the women’s organization “Khava” (chairman – Zhanna Khramtzova), the Organization of Former Prisoners of Nazism (chairman – Shabs Royf), the Hillel Jewish Students’ Cultural Center (established in November 1996). A branch of the Maccabi Movement was registered in December 2003. In January 2004, the organization “Nadezhda Yevreyskoy Semyi” (Hope of the Jewish Family) was established to aid unemployed Jews in professional retraining. The “Tvoy Vklad V Yevreyskuyu Obshchinu” (Your Part in the Jewish Community) project was launched in February 2006, aimed at strengthening and developing the volunteer movement.

There are about ten religious communities in the state which belong to the Chabad Lubavitch movement and are led by the chief rabbi of Moldova Zalman Leyb Abelsky (since 1989). The Agudat Israel yeshiva has been working in Chisinau since the early 1990s. There is also a community of Mountain, Bukharian, and Georgian Jews in Chisinau, called Juhur.

The Jewish union Tiqva Tzion has been offering higher education to Halakhic Jews in Chisinau since 2006.

There is a Jewish kindergarten in the state capital, as well as two lyceums with about 700 pupils – the Theodore Herzl ORT Jewish Technology Lyceum and the Rambam Lyceum. Summer camps are organized for children with the support of the Sochnut and the Jewish Family Service.

A new community center opened in Beltsy in August 2005, and another one called Kedem – in Chisinau in December 2005.

The largest cultural organization is the Cultural Center working in Chisinau since 1991 – the I. Manger Library. It hosts a Jewish artists’ club, music, dance, and drama groups; carries out much work on the club system; organizes exhibitions of books and applied art works; festivals; publishing and museum work.

Jewish music is very popular; concerts are given by the Vort Un Nign (Word and Tune) band, consisting of professors and associates of the Musical Academy, led by famous musician, journalist, and teacher Sergo Bengelsdorf (his memoir *Life in a Jewish Culture* was published in 2007). The international Klezmer music seminar/festival Bessaraber Lied has been taking place in Moldova since 1999. The Shaliakh Jewish theatre performs in the capital. Die Goldene Shoshane band is based in Bendery.

On the 100th anniversary of the Jewish artist Samson Flexor in September 2007, an exhibition of his paintings was opened in the Chisinau National Museum of Art. In June 2008, his name was given to one of the streets in Sorooca. In June 2008, the main theatre of Beltsy – the Vassile

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Alexandri National Theatre – premiered *Cantor*, a comedy by the American playwright A. Levine.

In August 2008, the Kedem Jewish Community House opened a personal exhibition of the works of the famous Moldovan graphic artist Eduard Maydenberg who has illustrated over 100 books, among them classical literary works and books by Bessarabian authors, and participated in international exhibition in Europe and Japan. Jewish motives are significant in his art.

The Community Jewish Book Festival (OFEK) has been organized annually since 1996. Days of Jewish Culture were held in October 2004. Moldova is one of the few countries with continuing literary activity in Yiddish. The radio journal *Yiddish Lebn* has been coming out since 1990 (host – S. Bengelsdorf). Two books by Yiddish literature patriarch I. Schreibman (1913-2005) were published in 2003 and July 2007. A memorial was built on his grave in October 2007. A Yiddish Center has been working in Chisinau since 1993; since 2008 it is called *Mame-Loshn* and is a part of the I. Manger Library. The Kedem Jewish Cultural Center opened a literary-musical club in 2007. Republican festivals of children's and youth art have been held since 1998.

Three Jewish newspapers are published in the republic: *Istoki Zhizni* (Sources of Life, published by the Chabad Lubavitch synagogue), *Oliva* (Olive, published by the Sochnut Jewish Agency), and *Yevreyskoye Mes-techko* (Jewish Shtetl, published since 2003 by the Dor le-Dor Foundation). The magazine *Moldaviya Turisticheskaya* (Tourist Moldova) began publishing a series of articles and photographic reports on Jewish sites in Moldova in July 2008.

The Moldovan legislation on the rights of individuals belonging to ethnic minorities is the best developed out of all the states of the CIS. The republic ratified the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms by Moldovan state Parliament edict on July 24, 1997. The fundamental legal act which finalized the legal status of the ethnic minorities was the Law of Republic of Moldova on July 19, 2001, "On the rights of individuals belonging to ethnic minorities and the legal status of their organizations". On September 1, 1989, the Law "On the functioning of languages on the territory of the Moldavian SSR" was passed (complemented in 2003 with regard to the Moldovan Republic); according to it, the Moldovan language on the basis of Latin script is the official language of the state, Russian is used as the language of interethnic communication, and Hebrew and Yiddish are used to satisfy the ethnic and cultural needs

of the Jews of Moldova. As a logical consequence, Moldova guaranteed the Jews the possibility of obtaining pre-school, elementary, secondary (general and professional), higher, and post-graduate education in their native Hebrew and Yiddish in 2001. On January 1, 2004, the Concept of Ethnic Policy of the Republic of Moldova came into effect. This statute proclaims the principle of inadmissibility of ethnic discrimination, and the Jews are named a constituent part of the united nation of Moldova. Thus, the Concept emphasizes: “The Moldovans – the state-founding nation – together with members of other ethnicities: Ukrainians, Russians, Gagauzes, Bulgarians, Jews, Romanians, Belarusians, Gypsies (Roma), Poles, and others, constitute the people of Moldova, for whom the Republic of Moldova is the common homeland.”

In September 2007, former head of the AJCOM Y. Tikhman and A. Pinchevsky were rewarded for their input into restoring the Kurki monastery complex. In July 2008, A. Bilinkis was decorated with the Gloria Muncii (Glory to Labor) Order for services to promoting historical and cultural heritage.

On March 25, 2006, the Chisinau Jewish community center opened a Tolerance Club for teenagers of all ethnicities. This is a joint project of the Moldovan Jewish organizations, the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC), and the Congress of Ethnic Communities of Ukraine (KNGU). The Jewish community took part in the 7th ethno-cultural republican festival “Unity through Diversity”, organized in 2007 by the Bureau of Interethnic Relations in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, the mayors’ offices of Chisinau and Beltsy, Gagauzia political unit, the district councils, executive committees, and the ethno-cultural organizations of the state.

In 2008 the AJCOM and the JCM in cooperation with the Va’ad of Ukraine opened a youth tolerance camp.

Diplomatic relations with Israel were established in 1992; the embassy of Moldova in Israel was opened in 1994. In 2008, the first Israeli ambassador to the Republic of Moldova was appointed; prior to that, the ambassador to Ukraine represented the interests of Israel in Moldova. President of the Republic of Moldova Vladimir Voronin paid an official visit to Israel in November 2004. During this visit, copies of archival materials on the Holocaust, stored in the republican archives, were transferred to the Yad Va-Shem museum.

A Moldovan Parliament delegation, headed by its speaker Marian Lupu, visited Israel in November 2007. A parliamentary group of Israeli-Moldovan friendship is co-chaired by Knesset member Leah Shemtov

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and Moldovan Parliament member Arcady Pasetchnik. An official Israeli delegation, led by Vice-premier A. Liberman (native of Moldova), visited Moldova in October 2007 and July 2008. During the second visit in July 2008, President Voronin decorated A. Liberman with the high government award – the Order of Honor (Ordinul de Onoare).

The union of Israelis of Moldovan descent “Izvora” (leader – Arcady Brover) held its first meeting in June 2008. In October 2007 the municipality of Beltsy signed a cooperation agreement with the mayor of Migdal ha-Emek in Israel.

In November 2006 and December 2007, Israeli Cinema Days were held in Chisinau. In October 2007, the building of the Israeli Cultural Center was solemnly opened in Chisinau. In June 2008, the Brynkush Gallery in Chisinau opened a photo exhibition dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the independence of Israel.

In 2008, Moldova and Israel signed an agreement on cooperation in the fields of culture, education, and science for the years 2008-2011. Economical relations are developing quickly. The Darkon Israeli businessmen association in Moldavia is presided over by Anataly Leybovitch. A significant part of Moldovan goods exported to Israel consists of alcoholic beverages.

In Beltsy, the “March in Memory of Holocaust Victims” has been taking place each July since 2005; it is timed to the anniversary of mass executions of Jews in the city. Similar mass events are held annually in Dubăsari. In November 2005 the AJCOM initiated a three-day seminar “History of the Holocaust” in Chisinau for district education department inspectors supervising the teaching of history in the lyceums and schools of the Republic of Moldova. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports initiated a Memory Week for Holocaust Victims at all schools and lyceums between January 27th and February 3rd, 2006. As part of the international educational project on the Holocaust and teaching tolerance, the travelling exhibition “Anne Frank – a History Lesson” was opened at the National Museum of Ethnography and Moldovan History in January 2007. The Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized severely the decision of the Romanian court to acquit George Alexeianu, who had been governor of Transnistria at the time of the war, and was to blame for the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent people on the Romanian-controlled territory between the rivers Dniester and Bug. He went down in history as one of the closest accomplices in crime of the Fascist dictator I. Antonescu.

In April 2007, the Moldovan Parliament passed amendments to the Law on additional social protection of disabled World War II veterans and their families, according to which former prisoners of Nazi camps in Moldova were to receive additional monthly compensations. In June 2007, the travelling book exhibition “Holocaust: Memory and Pain” opened in the Kedem Jewish Community Center.

There are Open University of Israel seminars on the topic of the Holocaust of European Jewry. The municipal authorities of Beltsy decided at the end of 2007 to name one of the city streets after the anti-fascist hero Musya Pinkenzon, who died in 1942; a memorial plaque in honor of his heroic deed was unveiled in January 2008 on the territory of the Jewish Community House of Beltsy. The leader of the Beltsy Jewish community Lev Bondar initiated in March 2008 a school composition contest called My Understanding of the Holocaust.

Unfortunately, there are to this day groups of opposing nationalist politicians in the state who deny the Holocaust; many schools still continue using textbooks published in the early 1990s which evade the issue. The Ministry of Education decided in May 2007 to introduce the “Tolerance – Lessons of the Holocaust” course into school curricula; in January 2008, the Moldovan Vice-premier V. Stepanyuk officially announced that new textbooks were being prepared with more attention to the Nazi crimes in the years of World War II.

However, the situation continues tense in this aspect, as in the spring of 2008 the European Committee against Racism and Intolerance recommended that Moldova should revise the contents of history textbooks and remove such information as discriminates the country’s ethnic minorities. Unfortunately, there are expressions of anti-Semitism as well. In September 2007 an International Book Salon opened at the Chisinau National Library, featuring the anti-Semitic book by Paul Goma, *Red Week*, claiming that the Jews were to blame for the annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR in 1940. After the Beltsy municipality decided to rename one of the streets after M. Pinkenzon, the Alliance newspaper which is close to the opposition – the supporters of union with Romania – published an article protesting against this decision. The journalist argued that M. Pinkenzon, who was killed by Nazis in the Krasnodar region, was allegedly “not one of ours”. On February 23, 2008, a swastika was drawn on the Triumphal Arch in downtown Chisinau. The visitors of the popular Moldovan website [www.forum.md](http://www.forum.md) regularly make anti-Semitic remarks. One of the nationalist historians, A. Petrenko, founded the Yevropeys-

koye Deystviye (European Action) party in 2007. A scandal is developing in Chisinau on account of a car dealership complex being built by the memorial to Holocaust victims.

In June 2008 the state Parliament adopted at the first reading the bill of the Culture and Tourism Ministry, prohibiting the publication and distribution in the Republic of Moldova literature with chauvinistic or nationalistic contents. However, the efforts of the government to resist anti-Semitism are so far insufficient; the authorities are yet to react to the Jewish community's requests to construct a memorial to the victims of the Chisinau pogrom of 1903.

Jewish Studies research is concentrated to the Jewish Studies Department of the Interethnic Research Institute at the Academy of Sciences of Moldova and the Jewish Studies Group at the Institute of Cultural Heritage (head – Literature Professor, Doctor of Philology Rita Kleyman). The main topics of Jewish Studies research conducted by Moldovan scholars are the 1903 pogrom and the Holocaust. 2004 saw the publication of the collection *Chisinau Pogrom 1903: a Glance over a Century*; in March 2005 the capital monograph by historian S. Nazaria *Holocaust in Moldova* came out. In November 2003 the new JDC-supported project was launched: *Review of Jewish History and Holocaust Sites in Moldova*. In the fall of 2007 in Beltsy, the program “Heritage School of Successors” began, intending to collect Holocaust testimonies. In the early 2008 the entrepreneur I. Rosenberg established the Zavet (Covenant) Foundation meant to find and immortalized Holocaust-related sites in the state. A Museum of Moldovan Jewish History opened in Chisinau in 2006. Over the time the Dor le-Dor Foundation worked at the Chisinau Jewish cemetery, its volunteers and employees managed to identify 17 thousand out of the total 24 thousand graves. The Foundation consequently published *Necropolis*, a book with a map of the cemetery and a list of surnames of the deceased. In January 2007, the Jewish Studies Department of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova began publishing the *Moldovan Jewish Encyclopedia*. In October 2007, the photographic album *History in Stone, Monuments of Moldovan Jewish Material Culture (17th-21st Centuries)* compiled by Mikhail Finkel, Yefim Goldschmidt, and Igor Teper, was published. The academic conference “Cultural Heritage of the Jews of Southern Moldova” was held in Comrat, the capital of the autonomous region of Gagauzia, on November 20, 2007. The *Jewish National Movement in Bessarabia in the Interwar Period (1918-1940)* by distinguished scholar Yakov Kopanski was published posthumously in June 2008.

In August 2008 an International Summer School for Jewish Studies was organized in Chisinau by the “Sefer” Center together with the Center for Training and Professional Development with the aid of the Chais Family Foundation, the Avichai Foundation, and the JDC.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF RUSSIA

The Russian Federation is the legal successor of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic. Its area is 17,075,400 kilometers square; its population is 141.9 million. Its Constitution was adopted through referendum on December 12, 1993.

The head of the state is its President, elected by general elections for a four-year term. Dmitry Medvedev has been President of Russia since 2008. The legislative authority belongs to the bicameral parliament – the Federal Assembly. The members of the lower chamber – the State Duma – are elected through party lists. The members of the upper house – the Federation Council – are appointed by regional leaders and legislative meetings.

The first information of Jews living in today's Russia is dated to the first century A.D. and related to the Bosphorus Kingdom which existed on the shores of the Kerch Strait. In the 6th-10th centuries the Khazarian Empire existed in the regions of Volga, Don, and Northern Caucasus; its rulers converted to Judaism in the 8th or 9th century. After the Mongolian invasion in the 13th century destroyed the Jewish communities which existed then, Jews appeared in Russian territories quite rarely until the 18th century.

The situation changed after the Partitions of Poland, when in 1772–1795 the Russian Empire annexed areas inhabited by almost a million Jews. Still, even then most of today's Russia's territory was excluded from the so-called Pale of Settlement, which only comprised several regions of those belonging to the Russian Federation today: the southern part of the Pskov oblast; the western and northern parts of the Smolensk and Tver oblasts; the western part of the Bryansk oblast; and the cities Rostov-on-Don and Taganrog. Only certain categories of Jews with special permits were allowed to live outside the Pale of Settlement.

In 1897, at the time of the first All-Russian census, 314 thousand Jews lived outside the Pale, which constituted only 6 percent of the whole

Jewish population of the Russian empire. The Pale of Settlement formally existed until 1917.

As a result of mass migration from the shtetls of the former Pale, the Jewish population of the RSFSR grew suddenly to 585,000 in 1926 and 956,000 in 1939. In the 1920s the state, on the one hand, repressed the religious and national elites, but on the other hand took active measures to help to develop the Jewish minority. In 1934, the Jewish Autonomous Region was created in the Far East with its center in the new city of Birobidzhan, 200 km away from Khabarovsk. Up to the end of the 1940s, the government organized several planned relocations to this region from the former Pale of Settlement. The goal of the Birobidzhan project was to create a Jewish territorial formation to counterbalance the Zionist idea of establishing an independent Jewish state. The Jewish Autonomous Region still remains a region of the Russian Federation.

In the late 1930s, most of the existing Jewish organizations were closed, their leaders repressed. During the Great Patriotic War the Soviet government was forced for foreign policy reasons to permit the formation of a Jewish anti-Fascist committee (head – Solomon Mikhoels) and a Yiddish newspaper.

Over half a million Soviet Jews, including citizens of the RSFSR, fought in the Red Army in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945; about 150 of them were decorated with the Hero of the Soviet Union rank. Almost half of the Jewish troops fell in battles. Most of the Jews who had remained in Nazi-occupied territories were killed in the Holocaust.

In the late 1940s, following the USSR's new domestic policy course, the Jewish anti-Fascist committee and all Jewish cultural organizations still existing at the time were closed, their leaders and functionaries either imprisoned or destroyed. In 1948, Solomon Mikhoels was killed; on August 12, 1952, most major figures of Yiddish Jewish culture were shot. A severe "cleaning" of the Jewish autonomous region was performed.

For several years the synagogue remained the only officially recognized Jewish institution in Russia, but the number of synagogues shrank dramatically during the anti-religious campaign of 1958-1964.

In 1961, the publishing of the magazine *Sovietisch Heimland* began in Moscow; the magazine became the official center of "Jewish literary renaissance" in Yiddish (published until 1999, since 1992 was called *Die Yiddishe Gas*).

Most Russian Jews became acculturated, separated from religious tradition, lost their native language, and considered Russian their mother

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tongue. At the same time, they formed a significant part of the Soviet intelligentsia. A specific model of Jewish identity was created, whose numerous features were preserved in the post-Soviet period both in the FSU and in emigration. It was mostly ethnic, and secular at a scale larger than any previously known forms of Jewish identity.

The so-called independent Jewish movement was conceived among the Jews of the USSR in the 1960s-1990s. Its main centers were Moscow and Leningrad, where quasi-communal structures were even formed in the 1970s. To counterbalance this process, the government organized an anti-Zionist committee of Soviet public in 1983.

The Jewish population of the RSFSR kept shrinking: 807,900 in 1970; 700,700 in 1979; and 551,000 in 1989. This was due to several reasons – low birth rate, emigration, and assimilation.

The first legal Jewish organizations in the RSFSR appeared in Moscow in 1988 – the Jewish Cultural Association (EKA) and the Moscow Jewish Cultural and Educational Society (MEKPO). In 1989, the first USSR Jewish Congress took place in Moscow, creating the first umbrella coordinating organization of the USSR Jewry, the Va'ad of the USSR, which existed until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Its activities were aimed at recreating Jewish communal life in the USSR, but they coincided with a period of mass exodus of Soviet Jews. Over the last decade and a half about half a million Jews have left Russia for Israel, the USA, and Germany.

According to the most recent census of 2002, the Jewish population of Russia was 233,400 people, living mostly in larger cities, about 70% of those in Moscow and St. Petersburg. However, most Jewish community representatives and experts consider this number rather understated, as some Jews still do not dare disclose their ethnicity, and some communities could have purposefully avoided the census. The Jewish population as estimated by experts is between 500 and 750 thousand (including family members and people who choose to hide their Jewish descent). In February 2008, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia announced its program of encouraging the birth rate among Jews, for which purpose a benefit was to be paid for the third child and every following one after they reached three years of age.

Next to Ashkenazi Jews there are noticeable communities of so-called Sephardic or Eastern Jews, mostly Mountain. Although the traditional centers of Mountain Jewish settlement in northern Caucasus (Derbent, Makhachkala, Nalchik) are still preserved, many Jews belonging to this

ethnic group have moved to Moscow and Pyatigorsk in the last 10-15 years. There are significant Mountain Jewish communities in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk, and Irkutsk. The World Congress of Mountain Jews (established in 2003, collective member of the EAJC), and the Foundation of Jewish Cultural Development by it are based in Moscow. At the same time there is a Congress of the Mountain Jews of Russia and the FSU (created in 2001 as a branch of the World Mountain Jewish Congress, president since 2008 – Binyamin Binyaminov). The population of the “Eastern” communities is rather difficult to estimate. The numbers offered by the census of 2002: 3,000 Mountain Jews and 100 each of Georgian and Bukharian Jews – cannot be taken seriously. Probably, some of them avoided the census, some were registered simply as “Jewish”, and some named their citizenship instead of their ethnicity and were registered as Azerbaijani, Uzbek, or Georgian. There is an estimate of several tens of thousands of Georgian, Mountain, and Bukharian Jews living mostly in Moscow. Besides, Russia has about 1,000 Karaites, 150 Krymchaks, and several thousand Sabbatarians – descendants of Russian peasants who converted to Judaism in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Among the umbrella Jewish organizations of Russia there are the oldest Jewish union “Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia – Va’ad” (the Va’ad of Russia, created in 1992, president – EAJC General Secretary Mikhail Chlenov) and the charitable foundation Russian Jewish Congress (RJC, created in 1996, president since fall 2005 – Vyacheslav Kantor). Besides, there are unions of religious Jewish communities of three movements: traditional rabbinic orthodoxy (so-called “Lithuanian” or “mitnaged” Judaism); Reform Judaism; and Chabad Lubavitch Hassidism. The latter is currently the strongest and most influential, united into the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia (FJC, chief rabbi – Berl Lazar, president – Alexander Boroda, over 200 religious communities). The FJC is currently working on building community centers in cities with a Jewish population of over 1,000. In 2007 this program comprised construction and reconstruction of 11 synagogues and community centers at once.

The first congregations of Reform (or Modern) Judaism appeared in Moscow in the late 1980s. They are currently part of the Union of Religious Organizations of Modern Judaism in Russia (OROSIR, chairperson – Irina Shcherban). The OROSIR and the Federation of Orthodox Jews of Russia (FOER), currently in the process of registration, which unites the orthodox communities outside the FJC, are both in the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations of Russia (KEROOR,

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created in 1993, chief rabbi – Abraham (Adolf) Shayevitch, chairman – Zinovy Cogan, about 100 communities, 40 of which – Modern Judaism communities). This kind of cohabitation of Orthodox and Modern Judaism within one organization is unique. In January 2004 and March 2006 the FJC attempted to annex the KEROOR as part of a project of creating a united Jewish community of Russia, but both the leadership of the organization and virtually all participating communities declined the offer, and the project gradually stalled.

After famous entrepreneur Arcady Gaidamak was elected president of the KEROOR in May 2005, it seemed that the organization was on the rise, and would perhaps present a challenge for the declining RJC, whose junior partner the KEROOR was since the moment of the former's creation in 1996. However, currently the KEROOR is also working through some development issues.

There are two current chief rabbis of Russia in the community: according to the KEROOR, it is A. Shayevitch, elected for the position in 1993; according to the FJC, it is B. Lazar, elected seven years later.

Another form of union for Russian Jews is provided by the Ethnic Cultural Autonomies (NKA), existing in accordance with a special federal law, adopted in 1996. The NKAs are ethnic secular organizations meant to provide diasporas with ethnic identities in terms of language, culture, and education. The law on NKAs stipulates the legal relations between the diasporas and the institutions of the state. There are 40 regional Jewish autonomies and several dozen local ones. The Federal Jewish Ethnic and Cultural Autonomy (FENKA) was established in 1999 (president since 2003 – Mikhail Chlenov, chairman of the trustees council since 2004 – Alexander Mashkevich).

In 2002, the Va'ad of Russia and the RJC co-founded the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress and were represented in the EAJC General Council (in 2007, the RJC left the EAJC). In 2002, the FJC and the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress initiated the World Congress of Russian Jewry, one of whose centers is located in Moscow (president since 2007 – Boris Spiegel). Representatives of the Va'ad of Russia and the FJC are on the Council of the WCRJ. In late July 2005, the FJC initiated the founding convention the Council of Sephardi Jews of the CIS. There are about 600 Jewish organizations in Russia altogether, including Sochnut and Joint offices. The latter supports a network of Cheseds with over 150,000 clients. The two organizations have begun shrinking the extent of their activities in 2004, due to reorientation to work with other regions.

The United Israel Appeal – Keren Kayemet le-Israel – opened a branch in Russia in the beginning of 2005.

Rating second in importance is the educational direction of the Jewish community's activities in Russia. There are 45 Jewish basic schools in the state and about 60 Sunday schools. There is also a small network of pre-school institutions, religious schools – yeshivas – and teachers' training colleges. Most school-level institutions are financed by the state budget as well as communal organizations (especially the Or Avner Foundation), the Jewish Agency in Russia, the ORT, and some international religious structures.

The Rabbi A. Steinsaltz Judaic Studies Institute in Moscow has published Russian translations of several Talmud and Aggada tractates since its establishment in 1989.

Higher education in the field of Jewish Studies has been developing steadily over the last decade and a half. Working in Moscow: the Russian-American center for Bible and Jewish Studies at the Russian State University of Humanities (established in 1991, leaders – prof. N. Basovskaya and D. Fishman, director – M. Kupovetskiy); the Maimonides State Classical Academy (established in 1992, rector – prof. V. Irina-Cogan); the S. Dubnov School of Humanities (established in 1991, up to 2003 – the Jewish University in Moscow); the Jewish Studies department of the Institute for Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University (until 2007 – the Center for Jewish Studies and Jewish Civilization at IAAS MSU, established in 1998, director – prof. A. Kovelman); and the University of the 21st Century (established in 2003 with the aid of the FJC, rector – prof. Y. Zaytsev). In St. Petersburg there is the Petersburg Institute for Jewish Studies (former Petersburg Jewish University, established in 1992, rector – prof. D. Elyashevitch), and the Center for Bible and Jewish Studies at the Philosophy department of the St. Petersburg State University, led by prof. I. Tantlevsky, was founded in 2000 as a shared project of the PIJS and the SPbU.

Next to full-time learning institutions in Russia, there are also programs of the Open University of Israel for learning by correspondence, and so-called National Universities of Jewish Culture – lecture centers which exist in many cities with larger communities.

The Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization “Sefer” has been working since 1994 (Academic Board chairman since February 2008 – M. A. Chlenov). The Center holds annual interdisciplinary conferences which are key events in Jewish Studies in the whole FSU, as

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well as field schools for high school pupils, graduate and postgraduate students, and young scholars. Collections of Jewish Studies conference materials and other scholarly works are published on a regular basis. The Bulletin of the Moscow Jewish University (since 1999 – Jewish University Bulletin: History. Culture. Civilization) is being published since 1993, and is now a leading periodical on Jewish Studies in Russian.

In Siberia, similar conferences are organized and Jewish Studies literature is published since 2000 by the Krasnoyarsk Institute of Social and Public Workers (ISOR), created by the Joint. One of the courses at the Birobidzhan Social-Humanitarian Academy is Yiddish.

June 2005 saw the grand opening of the Hebrew and Yiddish Literature Hall at the Russian National Library's Eastern Literature Center; among others, books from the so-called Shneerson library were moved there.

Archeological excavations within the Khazarian Project have continued in the delta of the Volga, on the Taman peninsula, since the beginning of the 21st century – in early September 2008 it was announced that the Khazarian capital Itil was discovered there.

Holocaust history studies are coordinated by the Holocaust Foundation (established in 1992, president – Alla Gerber) and the scholarly and educational center of the same name (co-chairs – Alla Gerber and Ilya Altman).

With the support of the educational community, the media, and governmental institutions, the term “Holocaust” was introduced into the project of the State Standard (the official federal program of compulsory education on each subject) in history. Work has begun within the Holocaust Foundation on the project of creating in the FSU a memorial and educational complex “Genocide – Holocaust – Tolerance” and a Holocaust encyclopedia. The Foundation has also initiated school history paper contests and expeditions to Holocaust sites.

Since 2006, events of the international educational program Limmud have been held in Russia.

The Jewish communal organizations of Russia have numerous programs in more than 100 cities of the country. In many cities there are diversified community centers; various religious and secular organizations; camps for children, teenagers, and youth; numerous educational seminars and symposia; and teachers' training and re-qualification systems. A number of cities have branches of the Jewish international youth organization Hillel.

Before the perestroika the Jewish press comprised only samizdat and a single officious publication – Sovietisch Heimland; now it counts over a hundred publications. There are several Russian-wide newspapers published in Moscow: the oldest Mezhdunarodnaya Yevreyskaya Gazeta (International Jewish Newspaper, published by T. Golenpolsky); the Yevreyskiye Novosti (Jewish News, published by the RJC); the Yevreyskoye Slovo (Jewish Word, published by the FJC); the JAR Bulletin (published by the Sochnut). The newspaper Ami is published in St. Petersburg by Y. Tzukerman. The largest periodical of its kind, the Lekhaim magazine, is published since 1991 (since the end of the 1990s with the support of the FJC). The Association of National Universities of Jewish Culture, supported by the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, has been publishing the Korní (Roots) magazine since 1994. The Or Avner Foundation came out with the Yunior (Junior) magazine in January 2006. A number of regional communities have their own newspapers.

There are also Jewish Internet mass media, the first of which appeared in the late 1990s. The best-known of these is the Sem40.ru portal, established by the owner of the publishing house Provincia, B. Giller. Its closest competitor is the FJC-supported Jewish.ru. February 2003 saw the arrival of the first news agency – the Jewish News Agency at the website of the same name (aen.ru), also supported by the FJC and the WCRJ. The KEROOR supports the project jjew.ru.

In Moscow, there is the Shalom Jewish theatre (established in 1987, art director – Alexander Levenbuk) and the Solomon Mikhoels cultural center (opened in 1988, general director – Mikhail Gluz). The latter has been holding annual Solomon Mikhoels arts festivals since 2000. The Klezfest Klezmer music festival has been taking place in St. Petersburg since 1995; since 2001 in Kazan there has been the Leonid Sontze International Contest of Jewish Music and Dance and the Yury Pliner International Jewish Culture Festival. In Birobidzhan, the Cohelet Jewish music and drama theatre is open, and an international Jewish culture festival has been taking place there since 1997. A Tat-Jewish theater opened in Derbent in 2005. The popular actor Yefim Shifrin uses Jewish topics in his performances, and so does the singer Yefim Alexandrov in his program “Songs of the Jewish shtetl”. Documentaries about the lives of Soviet Jews are directed by Vladimir Dvinsky, Galina Yevtushenko, and others. Two state Jewish theatres are currently in the works – a Jewish Culture and Lifestyle Museum in St. Petersburg and a Holocaust Museum in Moscow. The FJC is also preparing a Tolerance Museum in Moscow. The St. Petersburg

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Russian Museum of Ethnography (REM) opened its permanent exhibit “The History and Culture of Russian Jews” in December 2007.

The international theoretical and practical conference “Mountain Jews: Historical, Cultural-Ethical, and Religious Dimensions” took place in Moscow in February 2008, timed to the 80th anniversary of the first USSR national convention on culture-building among the Mountain Jews-Tats of the USSR.

The largest publishing house printing Russian books on Jewish topics is the Gesharim/Mosty Kultury publishing house, open in Moscow since 1990 (about 400 books have been published to this day). It was joined in the early 2000s by the Dom Yevreyskoy Knigi, the Daat/Znanie, and the Fenix publishing house in Rostov-on-Don. Since 2005 the Yevreyskoye Slovo and Text publishing houses have been printing the Chais Collection non-fiction series. The American Jewish Committee and the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress supported the publishing in February 2008 of the two-volume edition Children of Abraham, describing the history of cohabitation and the roots of conflict between Jews and Muslims.

The Russian Jewish Encyclopedia is being published since 1994 (authors’ collective led by Zeev Vagner) with six out of the nine proposed volumes already out. In 2002, Gesharim began publishing the bibliographic magazine Yevreiskiy Knigonosha (the Jewish Book Peddler, included into the Lekhaim since 2007), while the Dom Yevreyskoy Knigi came out with Paralleli (Parallels) magazine. The oldest bibliographic magazine in Russia is the Narod Knigi v Mire Knig (Nation of the Book in the World of Books) bulletin, published in St. Petersburg since 1995.

The 15th anniversary of the legalization of the Jewish movement in Russia was celebrated in Moscow in January 2004. The KEROOR held festivities in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Moscow Choral Synagogue in October 2006.

State anti-Semitism has been a thing of the past since the collapse of the USSR. The Jewish community of Russia cooperates actively with authorities of all levels. Both Vladimir Putin (President of Russia in 2000-2008), and his successor D. Medvedev (who visited the Moscow Jewish community center on December 5, 2007) regularly emphasize the perniciousness of racism and xenophobia in general and anti-Semitism in particular. In January 2005, during a ceremony in honor of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp by the Soviet Army, the President even said he was ashamed that there was still anti-Semitism in the country that had defeated Nazism. In their public

speeches V. Putin and D. Medvedev demand that the legal authorities fight nationalism and xenophobia more vigorously and unmask the ideological inspirers of interethnic animosity. Vladimir Putin has also supported the FJC's intention of opening a Tolerance Museum.

In October 2006 EAJC General Secretary initiated the creation of the Expert group on problems of Anti-Semitism under the World Jewish Congress (WJC) FSU Committee. The FJC has a special department for cooperation with the army, the Ministry of Emergencies, and legal institutions. The department is headed by Rabbi Aaron Gurevitch. A cooperation agreement was signed in 2007 between the FJC and the Federal Service for Administration of Punishments.

As part of restitution communities have received some synagogue buildings. Elsewhere, the state has allocated lots for building. The situation with restitution of other types of communal property is more complicated. Thus, the transfer of Torah scrolls was virtually frozen in 2000, after the FJC and the KEROOR clashed over the right to dispose of them. The clause of the NKA law on obligatory state funding for autonomies is not even symbolically followed.

According to sociological studies, ideological (consistent) anti-Semites comprise about 6-9% percent of the population. 17-64 percent of the citizens believe at some level or other in separate negative stereotypes to do with Jews. Such types of anti-Semitic vandalism as offensive graffiti on synagogue walls and desecration of cemeteries are widespread in Russia. Notably, so-called Holocaust revisionists have appeared in Russia in the 1990s, and because of mass mistrust of official historiography, their views began to spread even through works of fiction; there were also several cases of blood libel since 2005 (Krasnoyarsk, Istra, Lipetsk). Another typically Russian-specific phenomenon is the popularization in the 1990s of the "Khazarian myth", linking Russia's problems of all times with the Khazars who converted to Judaism and their descendants, who allegedly took over power in 1917. Most anti-Jewish outbursts are concentrated in the media, supported by marginal opposition parties and organizations.

Anti-Semitism in Russia traditionally remains part of the ultra-right-wing conservative ideology without being monopolized by any one party or leader. Among its followers are radical nationalists, neo-Nazis of various kinds, religious fundamentalists (belonging both to Orthodox tradition, including movements alternative to the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Islam and neo-paganism).

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To be fair, since the second part of 2006 the legal institutions have been reacting more sternly to the anti-Semitic activities of radicals. It seems that a certain system is emerging in the activities of the authorities, wherein not only the criminals themselves are persecuted, but their inspirers as well.

The Jews are far from being the main object of ethnic phobias for most citizens now. Prejudice against people from the Caucasus, Roma, etc. is more widespread and more radically and openly shown. The Western stereotype of open anti-Semitism being unacceptable in the rhetoric of any politician seeking popularity and respect is also making its impression.

Diplomatic relations between Russia and Israel were established in 1991. The relations can be called friendly as both states see each other as allies in the war against terrorism. Since 1994, Moscow is regularly visited by high-ranking Israeli officials (including virtually all Prime Ministers since I. Rabin). In April 2005, President of Russia Vladimir Putin paid an official visit to Israel for the first time in history. In January 2006 Russia joined Australia, Israel, Canada, and the USA in initiating a UN resolution suggesting that January 27th be named international Holocaust victims memorial day. In February 2008, Russian Ambassador to Israel P. Stegny announced that Israel's safety is Russia's foremost concern in the Middle East. At Israel's 60th anniversary celebrations, Russia was represented by the Federal Council Speaker S. Mironov.

An Israeli-Russian Commerce chamber has been created, led by the famous Israeli manufacturer L. Levayev. Agreements have been signed of economical and political cooperation (mainly, combating crime and terrorism). In May 2006 Israel and Russia agreed on expanding air communications, and the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a cooperation agreement with Israel's Association of Manufacturers. Israel has become one of the centers of Russian tourism with almost 200,000 Russian tourists visiting it in 2007. In 2008, a mutual visa waiver agreement was signed between Russia and Israel. A parliamentary league of Israeli-Russian friendship is presided over by Knesset member Robert Ilatov. In May 2008, celebrations were held in Moscow in honor of Israel's 60th anniversary. A special edition of the *Vokrug Sveta* (Around the World) magazine was dedicated to Jewishness, Judaism, and the state of Israel. In late May, 2008, the exhibition of paintings and drawings "Central Asia – Moscow – Jerusalem in the Work of Jewish Artists" was opened with the aid of the EAJC at the State Museum

of the East; it was dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the State of Israel and the 90th anniversary of the Museum.

These relations are prevented from becoming fully allied by Russia's wish to preserve contact with the former allies of the USSR in the Middle East, among the regimes and organizations Israel considers enemies. During the 2006 war in Livan there were publications in the mass media about "the Hezbollah organization fighting the IDF with Russian-made weapons". However, some armament deliveries were suspended in response to Israel's request. Israel, in turn, minimized in 2008 sales of weapons to Georgia whose relations with Israel are still tense.

A noticeable Israeli community has formed in Russia. Even according to official data there are no less than 1,000 Israeli citizens living in the country, whereas unofficial sources quote 20 or even 50 thousand. There are Israeli movie festivals in Russia since 2002. The Eshkol: Contemporary Jewish and Israeli Culture in Moscow Project was launched in 2004 in Moscow and St.Petersburg.

There is also a certain political expansion of Russian Jewish community members. A. Gaydamak is conducting extensive political activity in Israel (he ran for mayor of Jerusalem in 2008); RJC president Vyacheslav Kantor was elected chairman of the European Jewish Congress in June 2007.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF TAJIKISTAN

The republic of Tajikistan is the legal successor of the Tajik SSR. The area of the republic is 143.1 thousand square kilometers, its population is 7,215,000. The state is headed by the President; Emomali Rahmon (chairman of Tajikistan's Supreme Soviet in 1992-1994) has been occupying the post since 1994. Legislative authority is implemented by the bicameral parliament, Majlisi Oli.

The first Jews, belonging to a Bukharian (Farsi-speaking) community, appeared on the territory of today's Tajikistan in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ashkenazi Jews join them in the 20<sup>th</sup> – most of them specialists and their families, arriving in Soviet times. In 1959, the Jewish population of Tajikistan was estimated at 13.4 thousand people. This number dropped to 11,000 in 1989. The only institutional setting functioning in the Soviet period was the synagogues in Dushanbe and Khujand (then Leninabad).

Because of the general instability in the late 1980s and early 1990s (there was a civil war between 1992 and 1997), most of Tajikistan's Jews have emigrated, mainly to Israel, and some to the USA and Russia. Now after the mass emigration, the Jewish population of Tajikistan is estimated between several hundred and 2,000. According to official data, there are 600 Jews living in the state, most of them concentrated in Dushanbe (approx. 350), Khujand, and other regional centers of the country. Until recently the only functioning synagogue was in Dushanbe, but its building has now been dismantled. The synagogue in Khujand was closed in 1999.

Two Jewish public organizations were established in Tajikistan at the end of the 1980s: the Khaverim Society of Friends of the Jewish Culture and the Religious Community of Tajikistan Jews. The goal of the Khaverim Society (later – the Jewish Cultural Center) was to revive the Jewish culture, language, traditions, and customs. After the JCC director Gavriel Gavriilov was murdered in 1998, the center has ceased to exist. The center for Jewish public and religious life in the state since the mid-1990s is the Religious Jewish Community of Tajikistan, created on the basis of the synagogue

in Dushanbe (chairman since August 2005 – Valery Davydov, rabbi since 1996 – M. Abdurakhmanov). The Religious Jewish Community of Tajikistan is part of the Central Asia rabbinate, the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, the World Congress of Bukharian Jews, and the World Congress of Russian Jewry. A new Jewish public society appeared in Tajikistan in 2003 – the Akhdut (Unity) organization, whose chairperson is G.S. Dzutseva.

The main problem before the Jewish community of Dushanbe is the 2004 decision on the part of the government to demolish the synagogue which interfered with the reconstruction of the city, because it was in the peripheral zone of the park (1.5 km) of the Nation Palace to be (the president's residence). The community was thereby expected to move to an empty lot in the outskirts of the city with scarcely any compensation. Finally, despite many statements and protests from international Jewish organizations, the demolition of the synagogue began in February 2006 with several ritual, educational, and administrative premises torn down. After international Jewish organizations protested, the demolition was suspended. An EAJC delegation visited Dushanbe in May 2006; it was headed by EAJC President A. Mashkevich, and during his meeting with Emomali Rahmon the following agreement was reached: the construction of a new Beyt Rachel synagogue in downtown Dushanbe would be funded by the EAJC President despite the community's preference of a new synagogue on the site of the old one. The synagogue was finally demolished in June 2008, and the community did not receive a new building – the government only promised to aid its construction.

The community receives charitable aid from the Tajikistan Foundation in New York in the form of protection and beautification of the Jewish cemetery, and the community's employees' wages. In the past, sporadic support has been received from the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress and the Russian Congress of Bukharian Jews. Chesed Tiqva (Bishkek) has been helping out in Dushanbe since June 2004. August 2005 saw a Hebrew course open at the community. There was a humanitarian diner operating at the synagogue for many years, financed by Ukrainian citizen Nikolay Bazanov, feeding up to 30 people daily.

The community's activity is severely limited by a lack of financing – no Jewish holidays were celebrated in the community in the past three years.

Diplomatic relations with Israel were established in 1992. There is no embassy or consulate of Israel in Tajikistan. The post Israeli ambassador to Tajikistan is occupied since 2008 by Shemi Tsur, who is also the ambassador to Kirgizia, Armenia, and Turkmenistan. There is a Sochnut emigration office in Dushanbe, coordinated by O. Moldavskaya. In June 2008, the willingness

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of Israeli entrepreneur L. Levayev to invest significant sums into the economy of Tajikistan was announced.

Anti-Semitic tendencies in the state are mainly generated by the underground Islamist party Khizb-ut-Takhrir.

The only Jewish Studies-related events of note: the presentation in October 2003 of the book *Problems of Ethnic Minorities in Tajikistan* by the ethnographer T. Bozrikova, and two articles by Rabbi M. Abdurakhmanov in the Socio-cultural Quarterly “Dusti” № 1 for 2003 and № 1(7) for 2005, called ‘*Jews of Tajikistan: Past and Present*’ and ‘*The Holidays of Rosh haShana and Yom Kippur in the Religious Jewish Community of Tajikistan*’. All three were published with the aid of Soros Foundation and contain information on the life of Jews in Tajikistan. Moreover, Tajik cinematographers have created two documentaries on the current life of Tajik Jews: Dushanbe to Tel Aviv and “Tochikiston dar dili most” (Tajikistan in Our Hearts).

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF TURKMENISTAN

The Republic of Turkmenistan is the legal successor of the Turkmen SSR. The population is 6.8 million. The head of state is President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedow (since February 2007; December 2006 to February 2007 – acting President).

By the time Turkmenistan became annexed by the Russian Empire at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were about 300 Sephardic Jews living there, most of them Bukharian expatriates and the descendants of anusim<sup>1</sup> from Meshed in Gerat (Afghanistan). They were joined by Ashkenazi Jews in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the end of the Soviet period there were 4,000 Jews living in Turkmenistan, 2,000 of those subsequently emigrating in the 1990s.

Currently there are an estimated 1.2 thousand Jews residing in Ashkhabad (~700 Jews), Turkmenabad (formerly Charjou), Mary, Dashoguz (formerly Tashauz), Turkmenbashi (formerly Krasnovodsk), Balkanabat (formerly Nebit Dag), Iolotan, Bairam-Ali.

Turkmenistan maintains diplomatic relations with Israel through the Israeli embassy in Uzbekistan. Ambassador Shemi Tzur, appointed in 2008, is also the ambassador for Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Israeli businessmen are carrying out several agricultural and oil-and-gas projects in the state. There are JDC and Sochnut offices. The Sochnut office maintains a youth club and Hebrew courses. The JDC supports elderly Jews, there is a chesed organization in Ashkhabad. An e-newsletter serves as a sort of mass media; it has been arranged using equipment provided by the EAJC in 2003–2004.

Turkmenistan is the only state of the FSU without an officially registered Jewish community due to the specific legislation during Saparmurat Niyazov's presidency (1991–2006). There is no synagogue in the country. There used to be a synagogue for Afghan Jews in Bairam-Ali until recently, but its fate today is unknown. In April 2007, Chabad delegates managed to hold a Passover seder with the Turkmen Jews.

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The Jews of Turkmenistan participated in the work of the EAJC Council until February 2004, when the government-recognized representative of the Jewish population I. Shlotchitsky left for Israel. Currently contact with them is obstructed.

The Jewish emigration continues: 15–20 people leave the country every month. Those who wish to repatriate to Israel are aided by the Ashkhabad office of the Sochnut and the Christian Even-Ezer foundation.

There are only separate Jewish cemeteries in Bairam-Ali and Kerki, where religious Iranian, Afghan, and Bukharian Jews used to live. All the other cemeteries in Turkmenistan are mixed.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Jews who had formally converted to Islam, but secretly practiced Judaism nonetheless.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF UZBEKISTAN

The Republic of Uzbekistan is the legal successor of the Uzbek SSR. Its area is 447,400 kilometers square, the population is 26.7 million.

The head of the state is the president. Since 1990 it has been Islam Karimov, former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Uzbek SSR Communist Party; the two chambers of the state parliament are the Oliy Majlis and the Senate. The Prime Minister is Shavkat Mirziyayev.

The special sub-ethnic group of Bukharian Jews formed on the territory of Uzbekistan. The first authentic evidence of Jewish presence in the region belongs to the 4th century A.D. A large Jewish community in Samarkand is first documented in the 12th century. By the time Central Asia was annexed by Russia (1865-1873), the Bukharian Jews were a minority with diminished rights, and a small part of them, living in the Bukharian emirate, were forcibly converted to Islam (the so-called “tchala”). Jews were living densely in Bukhara, Kattakurgan, Samarkand, Tashkent, Karshi, Shakhrisabz, Kokand, Margelan, and other cities.

The discriminatory edicts, existing previously in the Bukharian emirate with regard to the Bukharian Jews (referred to as “indigenous Jews”), were canceled in the areas annexed by the Russian empire. After the region came under Russian rule, Ashkenazi Jews appeared there as well. At the same time the term “Bukharian Jews” emerged – used to define Jews arriving to Russian-ruled areas from the Bukharian emirate.

In the end of the 19th century there were approximately 16 thousand Bukharian Jews; at the end of the 1920–1930s there were about 20 thousand. According to the 1926 census there were 38.2 thousand Jews living in Uzbekistan. During WWII, Ashkenazi Jews from Nazi-occupied republics and USSR areas were evacuated to Uzbekistan. As a result, in 1959 the Jewish population of the republic approximated to 94.3 thousand. By 1970, it had grown to 102.9 thousand.

In the 1970s, about 10 thousand Bukharian Jews emigrated to Israel. The 1979 census showed 95 thousand Jews still living in the republic, and

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the same number in the 1989 census (26 thousand of these – Bukharian Jews).

The state's first legal Jewish secular organizations emerged in the years 1988–1999. May 1990 saw nationalistic riots, damaging, among others, the Jewish quarter in Andijan. During the period of mass emigration (late 1980s – early 1990s) no less than 80 thousand Jews left the republic. The emigration is continuing to this day. Beside Israel and the US, small groups of Jewish emigrants have settled in Russia; there are also small communities in Austria and Germany.

Today's Jewish population in Uzbekistan is estimated at 13 thousand, no more than 3,000 of which are Bukharian Jews. Tashkent has a relatively large community (about 8,000). There are smaller communities in Samarkand and Bukhara, and quite little ones in Fergana, Andijan, Namangan, Margelan, Kokand, and Navoiy. The communities contain both Bukharian and Ashkenazi Jews. Most of the Jews in Tashkent are Ashkenazi, Bukhara has more Bukharian ones, and the community of Samarkand is more or less equally divided.

There have been Sochnut and Joint offices in Uzbekistan since 1993. Tashkent is the residence of the Central Asian and Transcaucasian representatives of these organizations. The Sochnut has organized a network of branches and youth clubs. A network of Cheseds and community centers is supported by the Joint.

There are Jewish schools in Bukhara and Tashkent, supported by the Or Avner Foundation and the organization Midrash Sfaradi; the students learn Jewish history, customs, and traditions. There is an Or Avner Sunday school in Samarkand. There are Jewish kindergartens in Bukhara, Tashkent, and Samarkand, as well as a youth program called STARS.

The Sochnut, Or Avner, and the JDC support summer camps for youth.

There are two front organizations working in Uzbekistan – the Jewish National Cultural Center (chairman – Viktor Mikhailov) and a Mission of the World Lubavitch Movement (acting head – David Colton). In terms of press there are the Shofar newspaper (Samarkand), the newsletter of the Tashkent branch of Hillel, the Sochnut Jewish Agency bulletin, and the Israeli cultural center bulletin.

The Tashkent Jewish communal cultural center is headed by Rimma Golovina; the Tashkent Bukharian Jewish cultural center “Simkho” – by Tamara Akilova. M. Fazylov, who represents the Bukharian Jews in the General Council of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, heads the religious Jewish community of Samarkand and edits the Shofar newspaper. His three books called

Years, People, Facts... (1993, 1999, 2003) and the documentary The Jewish Diaspora in Samarkand: 1843–1917, filmed in 1998, present the Jewish history, culture, and architecture in the city.

There are functioning Jewish cultural centers in Samarkand (chair – Yosif Furman), Bukhara (chair – Abram Iskhakov), in Navoiy (chair – Yelena Borisova), in Fergana (chair – Semen Abdurakhmanov), in Namangan (chair – Inessa Braslavskaya).

There are 10 functioning synagogues in the country – three in Tashkent, two each in Samarkand and Bukhara, and one each in Kokand, Fergana, Margelan and Andijan. Tashkent and Fergana have a yeshiva each. The religious community of Uzbekistan (as well as the Lubavitch communities in Kirgizstan and Tajikistan) has been led between 1991 and 2008 by the World Lubavitch Movement representative in Central Asia Abe Dovid Gurevitch, who held the title of Central Asia's chief rabbi. He had to leave the country in early June 2008, rendering the position of chief rabbi vacant. The rabbi of Samarkand is Chabad representative Itzhak Yakobson.

There is a shortage of rabbis felt in the state today, which might be filled by Uzbekistan expatriates currently studying at US and Israeli yeshivas. Production of kosher fruit jam has begun in December 2005. The first stage of renovating the hall of Tashkent's central Beys Menakhem synagogue was finished in April 2006. May 2006 saw the beginning of the preservation project at the Jewish cemetery in Navoiy. A kosher jam factory is intended to be opened in the Samarkand region.

Power struggles between foreign sponsors and local communities are often discussed in the Jewish media, the situation aggravated by the Ministry of Justice often refusing to register Jewish organizations. Thus, two out of the ten religious communities are forced to function unregistered.

The central religious institution – the spiritual board of the Jews of Uzbekistan – has failed to attain registration for lack of branches in most of the state's regions and inability to provide a full set of papers for registration.

Diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Israel were established in 1992. The Israeli ambassador to the Republic of Uzbekistan since 2008 is Hillel Newman.

I. Karimov paid a visit to Israel in 1998, and met with the New York Bukharian Jewish community during his 2002 visit to the USA. In June 2003, with the direct participation of the Center for International Cooperation of the MASHAV (Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs), a Consulting Center for small and medium-scale business (KSMSB) was established, intended to lend informational and consulting support to small and medium-scale business,

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first and foremost – agricultural. Several hundred specialists from Uzbekistan were retrained in Israel, and over 10,000 more were able to raise their level of education at Israeli-organized courses right in Uzbekistan. There was an Israeli cinema festival in Tashkent in September 2006. February 2007 saw the decision to intensify traffic flow between the two states. April 2007 – Modern Israeli Literature and Drama Days took place in Tashkent.

The main field of research for the Uzbek scholars partaking in Jewish Studies (R. Almeyev and E. Nekrasova) is the history of Bukharian Jews. In 2004, the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan published the book, *Jews of Central Asia: Problems of History and Culture*, with the aid of the Soros Foundation. In June 2003 and May 2004 summer schools in Jewish Studies took place in Samarkand, organized by the Moscow Sefer Center, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Open University of Israel, the Jewish Agency, and the Joint, in cooperation with the Universities of Samarkand and Tashkent.

In 2002, the Public Museum of the History and Culture of the Uzbekistan Jews was opened in Tashkent on the basis of a Jewish school. In June 2008, as part of the preparations for Samarkand's 2750th anniversary, the museum *The Region's Jews in the Past and Present* was opened in a house formerly owned by the merchant Abram Kalontarov. The museum was sponsored by the Joint; its exposition contains archival documents and materials from the funds of the former museum of indigenous Jews (1927-1932), collected by its director and scholar Isaac Lurie. In 2007, the website [www.samarkandfund.org](http://www.samarkandfund.org) was opened, containing, by M. Fazylov's initiative, a database of the Samarkand Jewish cemetery (11,000 graves). The project was sponsored by the Samarkand Fund in New York. Also as part of the preparations for Samarkand's 2750th anniversary, the government issued funding for the wall of the Jewish cemetery to be repaired.

In 2004, with the initiative of the EAJC, the national education administration and the Jewish cultural center held a seminar in Samarkand for secondary school teachers, called "Tolerance – Lessons of the Holocaust". A one-day seminar of the same cycle took place in June 2004 in the Tashkent Jewish communal cultural center.

In 2005, Boris Iskhakov published his book, *Moshe Kalantarov*, dedicated to a 19th century head of the Samarkand Jewish community. That same year, a monument to Moshe Kalantarov was erected in Samarkand.

The Jewish National Cultural Center of Uzbekistan formed an editorial board to publish a *Brief Uzbek Jewish Encyclopedia*, containing articles on the lives of Jews who have made the most significant input into the devel-

opment of the state. The first volume of the BUJE is already prepared for print. Also ready to be published is the book History of the Jewish Communities and Jewish Cultural Centers of Uzbekistan. The JNCC supports the publication of: books by Jewish writers and poets M. Doctorow, L. Shulman, E. Fogel; a book about the famous Jewish composer S. Yudakov; CDs by Jewish singers and musicians. The book Jewish Doctors in Uzbekistan is being prepared for print. The Center supports the Shalom Tashkent dance group, directed by People's Artist of Uzbekistan Viloyat Akilova; the Mikhoels theater studio; and the Aladdin Theater. The Youth Theater of Uzbekistan has been playing *The Fiddler on the Roof*, based on *Tevye the Milkman* by Sholom-Aleikhem, since 1995.

There are radical Islamist organizations functioning in Uzbekistan, such as Khizb-ut-Takhrir, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and others, spreading rumors about I. Karimov allegedly being Jewish and Jews having usurped power in Uzbekistan. On July 30, 2004 four security officers died in terrorist attacks at the US and Israeli embassies in Tashkent. In May 2005 radical Islamist followers attempted to take over power in Andijan. Mark Vayl, founder and leader of Ilkhom Theater, was murdered in Tashkent in 2007.

In its struggle against radical Islamist propaganda and anti-Semitism, the Jewish National Cultural Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan has launched a series of publications called *Ideology of Terrorism*. The first book, *Khizb-ut-Takhrir Al Islami: Myths and Reality*, has already been published. The second book is ready for print – *Walking Next to Us, Not With Us*, on the terrorist organization called Tablig.

## THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF UKRAINE

Ukraine is the legal successor of the Ukraine SSR. Its area is 603.7 thousand kilometers square. Its population is 46.2 million (in 2008).

Ukraine is a semi-presidential republic. Its president since 2005 is Victor Yushchenko. The legislative authority is the unicameral Verkhovna Rada, elected by the proportionate system. The parliamentary majority (a coalition comprised of factions) nominates a prime minister (whom the president presents to the parliament for approval) and generally forms the government.

Jewish communities appeared on the territory of today's Ukraine in the first centuries A.D. in the Hellenistic states of the Crimea and Northern Black Sea Region. The following stage of Jewish history in Ukraine has to do with the Khazarian Khaganate – a state whose rulers professed Judaism. Khazaria controlled a significant part of the territory of modern Ukraine. Notably, the first authentic document to mention Kiev is a Hebrew letter dated to the 10th century, composed apparently by the members of the local Jewish community. Mentions of early-medieval Slavic-speaking (“Canaanite”) Jewish communities in the region disappear in the 13th century after the Tatar-Mongol invasion.

In the following centuries, Jews from Polish and Czech lands gradually migrate to Ukraine. In the mid-17th century, during the uprising of Bogdan Khmelnytsky, most of the Jewish population (especially on the left bank of the Dnepr) was destroyed, exiled, or had fled. In 1793–1795 most of Ukraine's territory was annexed by the Russian Empire. A Pale of Settlement was established for the Jews, which they were not to cross without special permission. To a great extent it was Ukraine where the image of Eastern European (Ashkenazi) Jewry was formed, with the peculiar culture of the township (shtetl). This was where Hassidism, a distinctive movement within Judaism, formed; a rich literature in Yiddish (the spoken language of Ashkenazi Jews) was created.

In the early 20th century there were about 2 million Jews inhabiting the territory of today's Ukraine, then split between the Russian and the

Austro-Hungarian empires. In the years 1881 and 1905–1906 a wave of pogroms hit Ukraine. In the late 19th – early 20th centuries significant quantities of Jews emigrated from the Pale of Settlement because of economical hardship and the pogroms (their main destination was North America, as well as South America, Australia, South Africa, and Palestine). After the Pale of Settlement was annihilated in 1917, many Ukrainian Jews migrated far inland (first and foremost – to larger cities of the RSFSR). During the Civil War of 1918–1920, several hundred thousand Jews (according to different estimates, 200 to 500 thousand) were killed in pogroms in Ukraine.

In the 1920s – 1930s there were numerous cultural, educational, religious, and cooperative organizations in Ukraine, as well as Yiddish courts and Jewish settlement Soviets. Jewish ethnic regions were created in the steppe part of the Crimea and Northern Black Sea Region in the late 1920s – early 1930s. Simultaneously, there was a war on religious communities and Zionist organizations, rather strong in Ukraine in the 1920s, and Hebrew culture was being eliminated. At the end of the 1930s, the ethnic regions were abrogated, most Jewish organizations closed, and their functionaries repressed.

By 1941, there were approximately 3 million Jews living on the territory of modern-day Ukraine. Little over 110,000 Jews survived while the Nazi occupation (most of them in its Romanian zone); over a million had time to evacuate. The rest were destroyed by the Nazis and their accomplices. The symbol of the Holocaust in Ukraine is the Babi Yar in Kiev, where about 34,000 Jews were shot over three days in September 1941. There is now an all-Ukrainian association of Jews – former ghetto and concentration camp survivors.

At the end of the 1940s the last Jewish cultural institutions left in the Ukrainian SSR were closed. Since then and until the end of the 1980s, the only legal remaining Jewish institution was the synagogue. The number of religious communities shrank significantly during the anti-religious campaign of 1958–1964. In the 1960s – 1980s Ukraine became one of the centers of the Jewish independent movement.

According to the 1959 census, there were 840.3 thousand Jews living in Ukraine. The census of 1970 showed the Jewish population having diminished to 777.1 thousand, and in 1979 it was 634.2 thousand. The decrease in population was due to losses suffered during the Holocaust as well as a low birth rate, emigration, and assimilation.

According to the 1989 census, there were 487.3 thousand Jews living in Ukraine, mainly in large and medium-sized cities. Over 450,000 Jews

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left Ukraine for Israel, the USA, and Germany during the “great aliyah” of 1989–1990. By today, the emigration has diminished significantly, while Jews returning to Ukraine are becoming notable. According to some data, a balance was struck in 2007: about 1,300 people left and the same number returned.

In the census of 2001, 103,600 people identified themselves as Jewish. Only 3,100 of these named Yiddish as their native language. Jewish organization leaders estimate the Jewish population of the state between 200 and 400 thousand, but many simply did not show their ethnicity or hid it. The average age of the Ukrainian Jews is over 50 years old. Even now this factor could lead to an abrupt decrease of the community. Next to Ashkenazi Jews, there are small groups of Krymchaks (700), Bukharian, Mountain, and Georgian Jews living in the state. There is also a small community of Crimean Karaites (834 according to the 2001 census, 671 of them in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea). The Krymchaks and the Karaites are autochthonous Jewish sub-ethnic groups, officially belonging to the short list of “native” Ukrainian ethnicities. However, the official leaders of most Ukrainian Karaite organizations (firstly, the Crimean Karaite Association “Krymkarailar”, the Supreme Council of the Crimean Karaites of Ukraine and the Spiritual Authority of the Karaites of Ukraine) refuse to admit that the Karaites are part of the Jewish people and emphasize the Turkic elements of their ethnic culture.

The first independent legal Jewish organization in the Ukrainian SSR – the Chernovtsy Jewish Social and Cultural Foundation – was registered in June 1988. According to information held by the State Committee on Ethnicities and Religions, there were 288 national Jewish organizations and 290 Judaic religious congregations registered in Ukraine in the beginning of 2008. About 100 Jewish charitable organizations and foundations should be added to this number.

There are offices of the main international Jewish organizations in Ukraine: the JDC, the Sochnut, the Claims Conference, and the Hillel. There are Sochnut offices in over 70 Ukrainian cities; the JDC has missions in four cities and supports Cheseds (welfare centers) in almost 70 cities with about 120,000 clients. At the same time some cities in the western part of Ukraine have their own charitable organization, joined in the system “Charity – Magen Avot”, founded in the early 1990s by the Va’ad of Ukraine and supported by the Association of Judaic Religious Organizations of Ukraine; most its offices were given over to the Joint in 1996 under the latter’s pressure.

There are several all-Ukrainian Jewish organizations and umbrella unions of local communities. In contrast to the international structures,

the “autochthonous” unions are characterized by a lack of rigid hierarchy. In the existing Ukrainian reality these are rather autonomously existing local organizations, whose participation in an umbrella union or other is formal enough and has little impact on everyday activities (see a detailed characteristic of Ukrainian Jewish organizations in a separate article in this issue of the Yearbook). This relates even to Chabad organizations, which are notable for their rather centralized structure and hierarchy in other FSU states.

The Va’ad (Association of Jewish organizations and communities) of Ukraine (chairman – Yosif Zissels) was established officially in January 1991; before that it was in fact a part of the united Va’ad of the USSR (Confederacy of Jewish organization and communities of the USSR). Today the Va’ad of Ukraine unites 266 organizations from 90 cities and is the most authoritative umbrella organization of the Ukrainian Jewish communities within the state and in the world Jewry system. In 2002 the Va’ad was one of the co-founders of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress (EAJC) with Y. Zissels presiding over the Congress’ General Council. He was re-elected for this post at the EAJC General Assembly in Jerusalem in the summer of 2007.

The Jewish Council of Ukraine (chairman – Ilya Levitas) was established in 1992 (registered in 1993) on the basis of the Republican Association of Jewish Culture (established in 1991), which in turn was the successor of the Kiev Association of Jewish Culture, founded as far back as 1988.

The All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress (AJC, president – entrepreneur Vadim Rabinovitch) was established in 1997. In 1999 V. Rabinovitch became leader of the All-Ukrainian Union of Jewish Public Organizations “United Jewish Community of Ukraine” (the abbreviated version of the title is used as a rule). However, in reality all Jewish leaders could not be united under Rabinovitch’s lead. Still, the AJC has made a number of inarguable achievements, among others – a presence in the informational space.

The Jewish Fund of Ukraine (JFU) was formed in the same year, 1997. Its founder and first president was Alexander Feldman, entrepreneur from Kharkov and people’s deputy of Ukraine; its executive director was Arcady Monastyrski. At the end of winter 2008 the JFU founders parted ways. In February 2008, A. Feldman together with Eduard Dolinski (former executive director of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine) founded the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, meant to become more of a political, representative, and lobbyist institution than actually communal, like its American counterpart. Businessman Oleg Grossman became the new JFU president in April 2008 with A. Monastyrski remaining the executive director.

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The Jewish Confederacy of Ukraine (JCU, president – Sergey Maximov) was created in 1999.

There are also several all-Ukrainian religious Jewish unions.

The orthodox communities are united in the Association of Judaic Religious Organizations of Ukraine (OIROU, director – Yevgeny Ziskind, chief rabbi – Yakov Dov Blaykh, according to its own data comprises 62 communities) and the Chabad Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine (FEOU, leader – Rabbi Meir Stambler, chief rabbi until fall of 2008 – Azriel Khaykin, unites 178 communities).

Followers of Reform Judaism have their own organization – the Religious Association of Progressive Judaism Congregations of Ukraine (ROOPIU), comprising over 40 congregations.

Several religious leaders at once are seeking the position of Ukraine's chief rabbi. In 1991 Rabbi Yakov Dov Blaykh was proclaimed chief rabbi of Kiev and Ukraine. However, in September 2003 Rabbi Azriel Khaykin was elected chief rabbi of Ukraine. He was supported by rabbis of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement (the majority in Ukraine). This proved no obstacle to electing another chief rabbi at the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress convention in 2005 – Rabbi Moshe-Reuven Asman, who is also a representative of Lubavitch Hassidism, but is in a state of conflict with the Chabad FEOU. Moreover, the Reform congregations elected a chief Progressive rabbi – Rabbi Alex Dukhovny – in 2003.

In the spring of 2008 Rabbi A. Khaykin announced his intention to leave the post due to concerns of age and health. Due to his resignation and funding cuts on the part of the “Chabad” Federation of Jewish Communities of the CIS, the FEOU is currently going through a serious crisis. The Kiev offices of the Federation and the Chief Rabbinate have been closed; the broadcast of the Jewish show “613” on national television has been terminated. The coordinating function is currently performed by the Chabad community in Dnepropetrovsk, their chief rabbi Shmuel Kaminetsky seen as Rabbi A. Khaykin's potential successor as Ukraine's chief rabbi. In the summer of 2008, it was announced that businessmen Igor Kolomoyski and Gennady Bogolyubov would support the construction in Dnepropetrovsk of the largest community center in the FSU, where Federation headquarters would eventually be relocated. In the fall of 2008 Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetsky took part in a United Jewish Community of Ukraine convention as the chief rabbi of the UJCU.

There are one or two locally notable communities each of Svir, Braslav, and other Hassidim in Ukraine. The Conservative movement is noticeable

in Chernovtsy and Kiev. In 2006, a mission of Midreshet Yerushalayim was registered in Ukraine, an Israeli organization carrying out educational activities as part of the Conservative Judaism Movement (head of the mission – Gila Katz, director of Midreshet Yerushalayim in the FSU and Eastern Europe). The Educational and Cultural Center of the Conservative Judaism Movement was opened in Kiev in January 2006 (program coordinator – Diana Gold).

The Ukrainian Kashrut Committee is a branch of the Kashrut Department of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia; its head is chief rabbi of Donetsk, Rabbi Pinkhas Vyshetzki. The Magen League is very active in Ukraine, fighting against messianic Judeo-Christian movements which try to convert Jews to their beliefs. The activities of messianic Jewish unions (such as Jews for Jesus, etc.) are quite apparent in Ukraine, but even from the state's point of view these organizations are not Jewish – despite their demands, the State Committee on Ethnicities and Religions will not register them as officially Judaic.

A significant range of issues has to do with restitution of Jewish communal property. Ukraine adopted a law in March 1992, according to which religious communities must receive their cult buildings and properties confiscated in Soviet times back. Moreover, a presidential edict prohibits privatization of cult buildings. As a result, due to efforts on the part of Jewish organizations, several provincial synagogues were returned as well as two synagogues in Kiev – the Galitzkaya and the Central Kiev Synagogue (the Brodsky synagogue); in the latter case the community funded the relocation of the puppet theatre housed in the synagogue building to other premises. Several buildings have been given over to the religious communities by local authorities instead of synagogue buildings that had been destroyed (Belaya Tzerkov, Cherkassy, Ovruch, Chernigov, Novograd-Volynski).

The Va'ad of Ukraine and the OIROU were the main ones to engage in restitution issues, launching in 1995 a project of cataloging Jewish property in Ukraine. Out of the more than 2,500 objects of former Jewish property known to the Va'ad, about 40 have been returned in 15 years. The last building that has been given over to the Jewish community is the synagogue in Chernovtsy (fall 2007). The restitution process is complicated by the fact that despite numerous attempts the state still has not compiled a registry of Jewish cult buildings, and as a result it is often the case that as institutions which are located on synagogue premises, are privatized, so are the buildings, in contrast to the aforementioned presidential edict. Thus, in the last year the Jewish community of Kiev has been struggling (so far, fruitlessly) to

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suspend the planned privatization of the Kupecheskaya synagogue, currently home to a cinema. Besides, there is also the issue of returning cult property to communities, first and foremost – Torah scrolls which are stored in state archives. There have been scandals to do with the fact that in the rare cases when communities had been allowed to store and use Torah scrolls from the state balance, archival organizations accuse (as far as can be seen, falsely) the communities of damaging state property. In November 2007, the President of Ukraine signed an edict for the scrolls to be transferred to the communities; however, this edict contradicts current legislation and is therefore disobeyed.

Virtually all Jewish cemeteries in Ukraine are in extremely poor condition. Despite an existing agreement with the USA and a corresponding edict from the cabinet council, the state does not attend to this problem and the communities lack necessary funds to look after the cemeteries.

One of the most significant problems facing the Jewish community of Ukraine is the strong dependence on external financing and shortage of funds for communal programs. According to the estimate of the Va'ad of Ukraine, only about 40 percent of the nominal common budget of the Jewish community of Ukraine is collected within the state, most of that – by the Chabad.

Certain actions of the state in the end of 2007 led to broad discussion in Ukrainian, Russian, and world press of the increase in anti-Semitism or even neo-Nazism, and it being supported on a state level. This discussion was first and foremost provoked by the presidential edict to (posthumously) grant the title of Hero of Ukraine to Roman Shukhevitch, commander of the Ukrainian Rebel Army (URA – a nationalist armed unit, created with Nazi support and functioning in Ukraine in the 1940s – 1950s). Various aspects of the URA's activities during the war came back into discussion in the press and the scholarly circles. In order to refute accusations of reviving state anti-Semitism, the President took a set of steps in the fall of 2007 which positively influenced the community's life – from a meeting with the leaders of the main Jewish organizations to the aforementioned edicts on the transfer of Torah scrolls to religious communities. His position also helped to budge the process of returning the synagogue building to the community of Chernovtsy, which had previously been dragged out over several years. Moreover, the President initiated the creation of a special department in the Security Service of Ukraine, which would resist anti-Semitism and xenophobia. In 2008, for the first time in the history of independent Ukraine, courts began passing sentences under article 161 of

the Criminal Code (“stirring up interethnic hostility”), including cases of anti-Semitic propaganda. Unfortunately, the process of glorifying the URA is continuing at the same time.

In July 2008 the Security Service of Ukraine published a list of people responsible for the Golodomor (famine in Ukraine in 1932–1933, which a part of the Ukrainian elite is trying to equal with the Holocaust, claiming that it was directed against Ukrainians); the list contained exclusively Jewish last names.

The number of registered anti-Semitic outbursts has not been increasing in Ukraine in the latter years; rather the opposite – according to monitoring conducted by the Va’ad of Ukraine and the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, there is a distinctive decrease on various indices. The main positive factors in this realm in 2007–2008 were the folding of the anti-Semitic campaign on the part of the International Academy of Personnel Management (until the fall of 2007 the IAPM produced over 90 percent of all anti-Semitic publications issued in Ukraine) and the energizing of legal authorities’ efforts in this direction.

Diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Israel were established in 1991. Zina Kalai-Kleitman is Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to Ukraine since spring 2007. The Ambassador of Ukraine to Israel is Igor Timofeyev.

An Israeli-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce exists nominally (presided over by Vadim Rabinovitch). In July 2008, Israel appointed its first attaché for commerce in Ukraine – Alexandra Aronina (prior to that, the attaché for commerce at the Israeli embassy in Bucharest was in charge of Ukraine).

There are 37 Jewish day schools in Ukraine, which (until fall 2008) were mainly financed by the Chabad Or Avner Foundation, 60 Sunday schools, 11 kindergartens, 8 yeshivas, and 70 ulpan, attended by approximately 10,000 children and adults in total. In the fall of 2008 the Or Avner Foundation suspended its support for secondary schools due to financial difficulties; the Jewish communities are currently looking for a solution to the issue, appealing first and foremost to Ukrainian businessmen. Next to Chabad schools there are also classical schools, supported by the Karlin-Stolin Orach Chaim foundation, as well as a network of ORT technological lyceums. The Va’ad of Ukraine supports a Center of Jewish Education. The main problem of Jewish secondary education is the low marketability of Jewish schools in terms of location; equipment; level of instruction in general subjects; and prospects of entering prestigious higher educational institutions.

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Children's, youth, and family summer recreation camps are organized with the aid of the Sochnut, the JDC, the Or Avner, Midreshet Yerushalayim, and the Va'ad of Ukraine. In the spring of 2006, as part of the Sochnut program Masa Shorashim, about 400 Jewish schoolchildren from the whole FSU spent ten days visiting Ukrainian townships related to Jewish history.

Higher education in the field of Jewish Studies can be obtained in Kiev at the International Solomon University (head of the promoting council – Roman Shapshovitch, rector – Alexander Rosenfeld). There is an Eastern-Ukrainian branch of the ISU in Kharkov. In 2008 it signed a cooperation agreement with Kharkov State University (KSU) and the Chais Center at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and as a result opened a joint center on the basis of the KSU. There is a Beyt Khana women's college in Dnepropetrovsk. 2003 saw the opening of a religious Jewish university in Odessa, whose first graduates received their bachelors' degrees in 2007.

In 1993, the Va'ad of Ukraine founded the Judaica Institute in Kiev (JI, founder – Leonid Finberg, director since 2006 – Yuliya Smilyanskaya), which is now carrying out several dozen research projects. The JI holds annual conferences on “Jewish History and Culture in Eastern Europe” and has many archival and publishing activities. Since 2003, a certificate Jewish Studies program has been working on the basis of the Humanities Department of the National University “Kiev-Mogilev Academy” (NaUKMA); its first graduates finished in 2006. In the same year the Judaica Institute and the Jewish Studies office of the Vernadsky Central Academic Library joined forces to create the Center of History and Culture of Eastern European Jews at the NaUKMA (director – Leonid Finberg). The Center continued several programs of the Judaica Institute, and initiated several new research and publishing projects.

A large national-scale cultural event was the exhibition “Kultur-Liga. Artistic Avant-Garde of the 1910–1920s” which took place in the beginning of 2008 at the National Ukrainian Museum of Art. A catalogue was published, and several topical events on the Kultur-Liga and its heritage were held. The main organizer of the exhibition was the Center of History and Culture of Eastern European Jews.

In August 2008, Bukovina Jews History and Culture Week took place in Chernovtsy with support from the EAJC. It featured the international conference “Yiddish Language and Culture”.

There is a Center of Jewish Culture and History (before 2008 – Department of the History and Culture of the Jewish Nation) in the I. Kuras Institute of ethno-national and political research at the National Academy of Sci-

ence of Ukraine; the center is led by Alexander Zaremba. The Institute also hosts the All-Ukrainian Center of Holocaust History Studies (director – Anatoly Podolski). Ukrainian researchers have made significant achievements in their study of Holocaust history. The Kiev Center of Holocaust History Studies and the Dnepropetrovsk Tkuma Center both publish topical academic magazines – *Kholokost i Sovremennost* (Holocaust and Modernity) and *Voprosy Kholokosta* (Issues of the Holocaust), respectively.

Since 2004, a number of educational and research projects have been realized by the International Center for Jewish Education and Field Studies (director – Artem Fedorchuk, coordinator in Ukraine – Vyacheslav Likhachev).

The EAJC supported the opening of the Bukovina Jews Culture and History Museum in Chernovtsy in 2008. A Holocaust Museum is being built in Dnepropetrovsk by the Tkuma center. Many provincial museums (Vinnytsia, Mariupol, Khmelnytsky, Bakhmut) feature exhibits on the history of the local Jewish communities.

Published newspapers: *Yevreyskiy Obozrevatel* (Jewish Reviewer, published by the Ukrainian Jewish Confederacy), *Khadashot* (News, published since 1991 by the Va'ad of Ukraine), *VEK* (AJC, published by the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress since 1997), *Yevreyskie Vesti* (Jewish News, published by the Jewish Council of Ukraine, funded by the State Committee on Ethnicities and Religions). Notable magazines: the literary-journalistic almanac *Yegupetz* (published by the Kiev Judaica Institute), *Ot Serdtza K Serdtzu* (From Heart to Heart, Chabad publication), *Orakh Khayim* (published by the OIROU), and *Gesher Most* (Bridge, published by the Sochnut). Virtually all large regional communities have their own publications (about 30).

**JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS OF EURO-ASIA,  
AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND  
(REFERENCE BOOK)**

*Compiled by Viacheslav Likhachev, Alexey Aristov (non-CIS countries), Vladimir Paley (CIS). The online version of the database could be found on the site of the Jewish Information Service [www.jewnet.ru](http://www.jewnet.ru)*

**AUSTRALIA**

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*COMMUNITY STRUCTURES*

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*MASS MEDIA*

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## MASS MEDIA

### Australian Jewish News

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House, Canberra 2600, Australia  
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**Launceston Hebrew Congregation**  
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**MELBOURNE**

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**Australian Centre for the Study of  
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civilisation

**Bentleigh Jewish Day School**  
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Phone: +61 (3) 9509 4232

E-mail: [cljustin@alphalink.com.au](mailto:cljustin@alphalink.com.au)

## **Heichal Menachem Research Library**

Address: 439 Inkerman Street, St. Kilda  
East, Victoria, 3183

Phone: +61 (3) 9234 1426,  
+61 (3) 9234 1466

E-mail: [shlomo@axics.com.au](mailto:shlomo@axics.com.au)

## **Institute For Judaism & Civilization**

Address: 88 Hotham St, E. St. Kilda

Phone: +61 (3) 9522 8222

## **Jewish Holocaust Museum & Research Centre**

Address: 13 Selwyn Street, Elsternwick

Phone: +61 (3) 9528 1985,  
+61 (3) 9528 3758

Web: [www.arts.monash.edu.au/affiliates/hlc](http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/affiliates/hlc)

## **Jewish Secular Humanistic Society**

Phone: +61 (3) 9589 7329,  
+61 (3) 9528 2201

## **King David School Isador Magid Campus**

Address: 517-519 Orrong Road,  
Armadale VIC 3143, Australia

Phone: +61 (3) 9529 5277,  
+61 (3) 9525 2247

E-mail: [admin@kds.vic.edu.au](mailto:admin@kds.vic.edu.au)

Web: [www.kds.vic.edu.au](http://www.kds.vic.edu.au)

## **King David School John & Robyn Levi Centre**

Address: 295 Carlisle Street, Balaclava  
VIC 3183, Australia

Phone: +61 (3) 9527 9722,  
+61 (3) 9527 9874

E-mail: [levi@kds.vic.edu.au](mailto:levi@kds.vic.edu.au)

Web: [www.kds.vic.edu.au](http://www.kds.vic.edu.au)

## **King David School Joyce & Mark Southwick Campus**

Address: 117 Kooyong Road, Armadale  
VIC 3143, Australia

Phone: +61 (3) 9822 3236,  
+61 (3) 9822 2491

E-mail: [southwick@kds.vic.edu.au](mailto:southwick@kds.vic.edu.au)

Web: [www.kds.vic.edu.au](http://www.kds.vic.edu.au)

## **King David School Southwick Pre School Centre**

Address: 76 Alma Road, St Kilda VIC  
3182, Australia

Phone: +61 (3) 9525 2372,  
+61 (3) 9525 2004

E-mail: [preschool@kds.vic.edu.au](mailto:preschool@kds.vic.edu.au)

Web: [www.kds.vic.edu.au](http://www.kds.vic.edu.au)

## **Liebler Yavneh College**

Address: 2 Nagle Avenue, Elsternwick  
3185, Melbourne, Australia

Phone: +61 (3) 9528 4911,  
+61 (3) 9523 7621

E-mail: [administration@yavneh.vic.edu.au](mailto:administration@yavneh.vic.edu.au),  
[principal@yavneh.vic.edu.au](mailto:principal@yavneh.vic.edu.au)

Web: [www.yavneh.vic.edu.au](http://www.yavneh.vic.edu.au)

**Liebler Yavneh College**

Address: 81 Balaclava Road, Caulfield  
3161, Melbourne, Australia

Phone: +61 (3) 9525 9166,  
+61 (3) 9527 5665

E-mail: administration@yavneh.vic.edu.au,  
principal@yavneh.vic.edu.au

Web: www.yavneh.vic.edu.au

**Machon Chaya Moushke**

Phone: +61 (3) 9522 8222

**Mount Scopus Memorial College**

Address: 23 Mayfield Street, St Kilda East  
Vic 3183

Phone: +61 (3) 9527 7339

E-mail: www.scopus.vic.edu.au

**Mount Scopus Memorial College**

Address: 1 Feodore Street, Caulfield  
South Vic 3162

Phone: +61 (3) 9578 3507,  
+61 (3) 9578 0141

**Mount Scopus Memorial College –  
Gandel Besen House**

Phone: +61 (3) 9525 9144,  
+61 (3) 9527 2795

**Mount Scopus Memorial College –  
Gandel Campus**

Address: 245 Burwood Hwy, Burwood  
Vic 3125

Phone: +61 (3) 9808 5722,  
+61 (3) 9808 9279

**Rabbinical College Yeshivah Gedolah**

Address: 67 Alexandra St., E St. Kilda 3183  
Phone: +61 (3) 9525 9165

**Religion School**

Address: 76–82 Alma Rd., St. Kilda 3182,  
Victoria, Australia

Phone: +61 (3) 9510 1488,  
+61 (3) 9521 1229

E-mail: rhonda.nirens@tbi.org.au

**Sholem Aleichem College**

Address: 11 Sinclair Street, Elsternwick,  
Victoria, 3185

Phone: +61 (3) 9528 5230, +61 (3)  
9528 2052

E-mail: principal@sholem.vic.edu.au

Web: www.sholem.vic.edu.au

**The Jewish Learning Centre of  
Melbourne**

Address: 280 Orrong Rd., Caulfield,  
3161, Victoria, Australia

Phone: +61 (3) 9527 3718,  
+61 (3) 9524 9888

E-mail: enquiries@mjlc.org

Web: www22.brinkster.com/pgampel

**The University of Melbourne Centre  
for Jewish History and Culture**

Address: Room 249, Old Arts building,  
The University of Melbourne, Parkville,  
Victoria 3010

Phone: +61 (3) 8344 5518,  
+61 (3) 8344 0194

E-mail: maeg@unimelb.edu.au

Web: www.hebrew.unimelb.edu.au

**United Jewish Education Board**

President: Mr Arnold Dexter

Address: 306 Hawthorn Rd., Caulfield  
VIC 3162

Phone: +61 (3) 9272 5522,  
+61 (3) 9272 5520

E-mail: ujev@ujev.org.au

Web: www.ujev.org.au

**Woman of Valour – Jewish Education  
Foundation**

Address: 1/20 Tennyson Street, Malvern

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

East, Victoria, 3145  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9529 5022,  
+61 (3) 9571 3337  
*E-mail:* [helsiejohn@iprimus.com.au](mailto:helsiejohn@iprimus.com.au)

## **Yeshivah Centre**

*Address:* 88 Hotham Street, St. Kilda  
East, Victoria, 3183  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9522 8222,  
+61 (3) 9522 8266  
*Web:* [www.yeshivahcentre.org](http://www.yeshivahcentre.org)

### COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

## **Advocates for Jewish Ageing Rights (AJAR)**

*Address:* P.O. Box 273, Bentleigh 3204  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9557 5477

## **Anti-Defamation Commission of B'nai B'rith**

*Address:* 99 Hotham St., Balaclava 3183  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 1228,  
+61 (3) 9525 9127

## **Australasian Union of Jewish Students**

*Address:* 306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield  
South, VIC 3162  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5622,  
+61 (3) 9272 5620  
*E-mail:* [melbourne@aujs.com.au](mailto:melbourne@aujs.com.au)  
*Web:* [www.aujs.com.au](http://www.aujs.com.au)

## **Australia Asia Pacific Jewish Restitution Committee**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9522 8275

## **Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC)**

*Address:* Level 1, 22 Albert Road, South  
Melbourne VIC 3205  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9681 6660,  
+61 (3) 9681 6650  
*E-mail:* [aijac@aijac.org.au](mailto:aijac@aijac.org.au),

[crubenstein@aijac.org.au](mailto:crubenstein@aijac.org.au)  
*Web:* [www.aijac.org.au](http://www.aijac.org.au)  
*National Chairman:* Mark Leibler

## **Australia-Israel Friendship Association Inc.**

*Address:* P.O. Box 1058, Belvedere Park  
LPO, Seaford, Victoria, 3198  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9750 0206  
*E-mail:* [aifa@tpg.com.au](mailto:aifa@tpg.com.au)

## **Australian Friends of Shaarei Zedek Hospital**

*Address:* P.O. Box 509, Elsternwick 3185  
*Phone:* +61 (4) 1895 6383

## **Australian Friends of Tel Aviv University**

*Address:* TOK Corporate Centre, Level 1,  
459 Toorak Rd, Toorak 3142  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9497 4007,  
+61 (3) 9296 2165

## **Australian Jewish Democratic Society**

*Address:* P.O. Box 685, Kew 3101  
Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9482 3209,  
+61 (3) 9489 1887  
*E-mail:* [secretary@ajds.org.au](mailto:secretary@ajds.org.au),  
[editor@ajds.org.au](mailto:editor@ajds.org.au)  
*Web:* [www.ajds.org.au](http://www.ajds.org.au)

## **Australian Jewish Friends of Argentina (AJFA)**

*Address:* P.O. Box 173, 199 Toorak Road,  
South Yarra, Victoria, 3141  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9513 3252  
*E-mail:* [info@ajfaonline.org](mailto:info@ajfaonline.org)

## **Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Victoria)**

*President:* Leslie Oberman  
([oberman@ozemail.com.au](mailto:oberman@ozemail.com.au))

*Address:* Makor Jewish Community  
Library, 306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield  
South, Victoria, 3162  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9523 6738,  
+61 (3) 9532 7797  
*E-mail:* sharpe@labyrinth.net.au,  
oberman@ozemail.com.au  
*Web:* www.ajgs.exist.com.au

**Australian Jewish Historical Society  
(VIC)**

*Address:* P.O. Box 608, Carnegie, Victoria  
3163, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9563 4737,  
+61 (3) 9563 4767  
*E-mail:* aarons@melbpc.org.au

**Australian Jewish Psychologists**

*Phone:* +61 (4) 0999 8191  
*E-mail:* nicky.jacobs@med.monash.edu.au

**B'nai B'rith Australia and New  
Zealand**

*Chairman:* George Huppert  
*Address:* 99 Hotham Street, Balaclava,  
Melbourne, VIC 3183  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 8249,  
+61 (3) 9527 8259  
*E-mail:* bbvic@bigpond.net.au,  
bbmelb@ozemail.com.au  
*Web:* www.bnaibrith.org.au

**Bar-Ilan University Friends**

*Address:* Suite 7, Level 1, 242 Hawthorn  
Rd, Caulfield  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9524 3121,  
+61 (3) 9524 3111

**Beitar**

*Address:* P.O. Box 393, Elsternwick,  
Victoria, 3185  
*Phone:* +61 (4) 1361 4785  
*Web:* http://au.betar.org/melbourne

**Caulfield Hebrew Congregation  
Function Centre**

*Address:* 572 Inkerman Road, Caulfield,  
Melbourne, Victoria 3161  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9492 ,  
+61 (3) 9525 9492  
*E-mail:* admin@caulfieldshule.com  
*Web:* www.caulfieldshule.com

**Chabad House Malvern/  
Toorak Inc.**

*Address:* 316 Glenferrie Road, Malvern,  
Victoria, 3141  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9822 4985,  
+61 (3) 9822 1093

**Child Survivors of the Holocaust**

*Address:* Holocaust Centre, 13 Selwyn  
St., Elsternwick  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9578 5984

**Descendants of the Shoah Inc.**

*E-mail:* holocaust@dosinc.org.au  
*Web:* www.dosinc.org.au

**Federation of Polish Jews**

*Address:* 28 Labassa Grove, Caulfield,  
Victoria, 3161  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9952,  
+61 (3) 9525 9952

**Friends of Magen David Adom**

*Address:* 306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield  
South, Victoria, 3162  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5633,  
+61 (3) 9272 5530,  
+61 (3) 9272 5634  
*E-mail:* mda@alphalink.com.au  
*Web:* www.magendavidadom.org.au

**Friends of Refugees from Eastern  
Europe (FREE)**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 6341

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Habonim Dror Australia**

*Address:* 1 Sinclair St., Elsternwick,  
Melbourne, Australia  
*E-mail:* maya@vicnet.net.au,  
davidlipshutz@hotmail.com  
*Web:* www.geocities.com/  
habonimmelb/habomain.html

## **Hamerkaz Shelanu**

*Address:* 482c Glenhuntly Road,  
Elsternwick, Victoria, 3185  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9533 0090,  
+61 (3) 9533 0049  
*E-mail:* motty@ozemail.com.au

## **Hashomer Hatzair**

*Address:* 214 Inkerman Street, St. Kilda,  
Victoria, 3182  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9534 1091

## **Hineni Youth Australia**

*Phone:* +61 (4) 0113 9577

## **Israel Aliya Centre**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5688

## **Jewish Approach to Contemporary Issues**

*Phone:* +61 (4) 0827 2636  
*E-mail:* info@jaci.com.au,  
jaci\_1999@hotmail.com  
*Web:* www.jaci.com.au

## **Jewish Care (Victoria) Inc.**

*Address:* 619 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne,  
Vic 3004  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 8517 5999,  
+61 (3) 8517 5777,  
+61 (3) 8517 5778  
*E-mail:* jewishcare@jewishcare.org.au  
*Web:* www.jewishcare.org.au

## **Jewish Community Library «Makor»**

*Address:* 306 Hawthorn Road, Melbourne

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5611,  
+61 (3) 9272 5629  
*E-mail:* info@makorlibrary.com,  
jlibrary@vicnet.net.au  
*Web:* www.makorlibrary.com

## **Jewish Community Services**

*Address:* 25–27 Alma Rd, St Kilda 3182  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 4000,  
+61 (3) 9525 3737

## **Jewish Cultural Centre and National Library 'Kadimah'**

*Address:* 7 Selwyn Street, Elsternwick,  
Victoria 3185, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9523 9817,  
+61 (3) 9523 6161  
*E-mail:* kadimah@clari.net.au  
*Web:* http://home.primus.com.au/  
kadimah

## **Jewish Heritage Tape Library**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 9299

## **Jewish Museum of Australia**

*Director:* Helen Light  
*Address:* 26 Alma Road, St. Kilda,  
Victoria 3182  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9534 0083,  
+61 (3) 9534 0844  
*E-mail:* hlight@jewishmuseum.com.au,  
info@jewishmuseum.com.au  
*Web:* www.jewishmuseum.com.au

## **Jewish National Fund of Australia Inc**

*President:* Mr. Tom Borsky  
*Address:* 306 Hawthorn Road, South  
Caulfield, VIC 3162  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5666,  
+61 (3) 9272 5573  
*E-mail:* office@jnfaus.com.au  
*Web:* www.jnfaustralia.com.au

**Jewish Secular Humanistic Society**

Phone: +61 (3) 9528 2201,  
+61 (3) 9534 7635

**Keren Mishpachot Hagiborim**

Address: Beth Weizmann Community  
Centre, 306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield  
South, Victoria, 3162  
Phone: +61 (3) 9592 3509,  
+61 (3) 9859 5883

**Keshet**

Address: 7 Otira Road, North Caulfield,  
3161, Victoria, Australia  
Phone: +61 (3) 9525 8091  
E-mail: info@keshet.org.au  
Web: www.keshet.org.au

**Kosher Australia Pty Ltd**

Address: 81 Balaclava Road, Caulfield  
3161, Australia  
Phone: +61 (3) 9525 9895,  
+61 (3) 9527 5665  
E-mail: info@kosher.org.au  
Web: www.kosher.org.au

**Maccabi Victoria**

Address: Maccabi Victoria, 306  
Hawthorn Road, Caulfield South,  
Victoria, 3162  
Phone: +61 (3) 9272 5660,  
+61 (3) 9278 4125,  
+61 (3) 9272 5650 / 9629 1941  
E-mail: admin@macvic.com.au  
Web: www.macvic.com.au

**Melbourne Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society**

Phone: +61 (3) 9525 4000

**Melbourne Jewish Friendly Society**

Address: 306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield  
South, Victoria, 3162

Phone: +61 (3) 9272 5677

**Na'amat – Orah Group**

Phone: +61 (3) 9576 0865

**National Council of Jewish Women of Australia**

Address: 133 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield,  
Victoria, 3161  
Phone: +61 (3) 9523 0535,  
+61 (3) 9523 0536,  
+61 (3) 9523 0156  
E-mail: ncjwvic@netlink.com.au  
Web: www.ncjw.org.au

**Netzer Australia**

Address: 76 Alma Road, St. Kilda, VIC.  
3182  
Phone: +61 (3) 9510 1488,  
+61 (3) 9521 1229  
E-mail: netzer.australia@mail.com

**North Eastern Jewish Centre**

Address: 6 High Street, Doncaster,  
Victoria, 3108  
Phone: +61 (3) 9816 3516,  
+61 (3) 9857 4430  
E-mail: nejc@bigpond.com

**Saltpillar Theatre Company**

Address: P.O. Box 3029, Ripponlea,  
Victoria, 3185  
Phone: +61 (3) 9523 0169,  
+61 (3) 9527 1720  
E-mail: saltpillartc@hotmail.com

**Shalom Association**

Address: P.O. Box 130, St. Kilda, Victoria  
3182, Australia  
Phone: +61 (3) 9525 6516  
E-mail: association\_shalom@hotmail.com  
Web: http://home.vicnet.net.au/  
~ruscom/local/shalom

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Temple Beth Israel Jewish Community Centre**

*President:* Mr. Joe Lewit  
([president@tbi.org.au](mailto:president@tbi.org.au))  
*Address:* 76 - 82 Alma Rd., St.Kilda 3182,  
Victoria, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9510 1488,  
+61 (3) 9521 1229  
*E-mail:* [president@tbi.org.au](mailto:president@tbi.org.au),  
[rabbi.fred.morgan@tbi.org.au](mailto:rabbi.fred.morgan@tbi.org.au),  
*Web:* [www.tbi.org.au](http://www.tbi.org.au)

## **The Australian Reform Zionist Organisation**

*Address:* C/O 17 Hart Road, Caulfield  
Nth, Vic 3161  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9523 5618,  
+61 (3) 9509 6969  
*E-mail:* [granekc@ocean.com.au](mailto:granekc@ocean.com.au),  
[samuels@bigpond.net.au](mailto:samuels@bigpond.net.au)  
*Web:* [www.arzi.org](http://www.arzi.org)

## **The Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria) Inc.**

*Address:* Shalom, 179 Cotham Road,  
Kew, Victoria, 3101  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9817 3848,  
+61 (3) 9817 3848  
*E-mail:* [ccjvic@corplink.com.au](mailto:ccjvic@corplink.com.au)  
*Web:* [www.ccjvic.org](http://www.ccjvic.org)

## **The Melbourne Jewish Male Voice Choir (Inc.)**

*Address:* 48 Bambra Road, Caulfield  
North, Victoria, 316  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9706 7355,  
+61 (3) 9572 3121  
*E-mail:* [jaswe@optushome.com.au](mailto:jaswe@optushome.com.au)

## **The Jewish Community Council of Victoria**

*President:* Michael Lipshutz  
*Address:* 306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield

South, Victoria, 3162, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5566,  
+61 (3) 9272 5560  
*E-mail:* [jccv@jccv.org.au](mailto:jccv@jccv.org.au)  
*Web:* [www.jccv.org.au](http://www.jccv.org.au)

## **The Sephardi Association of Victoria Inc.**

*Address:* 79 Hotham Street, East St.  
Kilda, Victoria 3183, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 8863,  
+61 (3) 9525 1186,  
+61 (3) 9836 8367  
*E-mail:* [acinfo@mail.com](mailto:acinfo@mail.com),  
[speak2us@sephardivic.org](mailto:speak2us@sephardivic.org)  
*Web:* [www.sephardivic.org](http://www.sephardivic.org)

## **The State Zionist Council of Victoria**

*Address:* Beth Weizmann Community  
Centre, 306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield  
South, Victoria, 3162  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5544,  
+61 (3) 9272 5640  
*E-mail:* [szc@szcvic.org](mailto:szc@szcvic.org)  
*Web:* [www.anitzioni.com](http://www.anitzioni.com)

## **Theodor Herzl Social Club Inc.**

*Address:* 222 Balaclava Road, Caulfield,  
Victoria, 3161  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9576 0708

## **Victorian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

*President:* Mr. Aubrey Miller  
*Address:* 306 Hawthorn Rd., Caulfield  
South VIC 3162  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5511,  
+61 (3) 9272 5511  
*E-mail:* [vfhuvic@netspace.net.au](mailto:vfhuvic@netspace.net.au)  
*Web:* [www.austfhu.org.au](http://www.austfhu.org.au)

## **Women Caring for Women**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9509 3343

**Women's International Zionist Organisations**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9272 5588,  
+61 (3) 9272 5590

*E-mail:* wizovic@netspace.net.au

*Web:* www.wizo.org.au

*OFFICIAL STRUCTURES OF ISRAEL*

**Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce**

Mr. Marcus Mandie

*Address:* 11 Queens Road, Melbourne, VIC 3004

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9820 3363,  
+61 (3) 9820 3190

*E-mail:* melbourne@aicc.org.au,  
marcus@aicc.org.au

*Web:* www.aicc.org.au

*RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS*

**Adass Israel Congregation**

*Address:* 12-24 Glen Eira Rd., Ripponlea, Melbourne

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9532 7328

**Ballarat Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* Cnr Princes and Barclay Streets, Ballarat

*Phone:* +61 (3) 5332 1271

**Beis Chabad Yotzei Rusia**

*Address:* 366 Carlisle St., Balaclava

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 6341,  
+61 (3) 9527 8058

**Beit Aharon**

*Address:* 15 Mayfield St., E St. Kilda, Melbourne

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9178

**Bentleigh Progressive Congregation**

*Address:* 549 Centre Road, Bentleigh 3204, Melbourne

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9563 9208,  
+61 (3) 9557 9880

*E-mail:* bpsadmin@bigpond.com.au,  
bpsrabbi@bigpond.com.au

*Web:* www.bps.org.au

**Bentleigh Progressive Synagogue**

*President:* Frank Moore

(bpspres@bigpond.com.au)

*Address:* 549 Centre Road (P.O. Box 69), Bentleigh 3204

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9563 9208,  
+61 (3) 9557 9880

*E-mail:* bpsadmin@bigpond.com.au,  
bpsrabbi@bigpond.com.au

*Web:* www.bps.org.au

**Beth Chabad Ohel Devora**

*Address:* 30 Meadow St., E St. Kilda

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 9361

**Blake Street Hebrew Congregation**

*President:* David Abramson

(david.abramson@bigpond.com)

*Address:* Melbourne, 936 Glenhuntly Road, South Caulfield

*Phone:* +61 (4) 1737 5635 (mobile),  
+61 (4) 1302 7567 (mobile)

*E-mail:* blakestreet@netspace.net.au,  
david.abramson@bigpond.com

*Web:* www.blakestreet.org.au

**Brighton Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* 136 Marriage Road, E Brighton

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9592 9179,  
+61 (3) 9557-1583,  
+61 (3) 9593 1682

*E-mail:* brightonshule@iprimus.com.au

**Burwood Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* Bursztyn Synagogue, Mount Scopus College, Burwood

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9571 6574

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Carnegie Minyan**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9579 7107

## **Caulfield Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* 572 Inkerman Road, Caulfield, Melbourne, Victoria, 3161

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9492,  
+61 (3) 9527 8463

*E-mail:* [admin@caulfieldshule.com](mailto:admin@caulfieldshule.com)

*Web:* [www.caulfieldshule.com](http://www.caulfieldshule.com)

## **Caulfield Synagogue**

*Address:* 572 Inkerman Road, Caulfield, Melbourne, Victoria, 3161

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9492,  
+61 (3) 9527 8463

*E-mail:* [admin@caulfieldshule.com](mailto:admin@caulfieldshule.com)

*Web:* [www.caulfieldshule.com](http://www.caulfieldshule.com)

## **Central Shule – Chabad**

*Address:* Glen Eira College Auditorium, Cnr Neerim and Booran Rds, S. Caulfield

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9532 9180

## **Chabad House Caulfield**

*Address:* 441 Inkerman St., E St. Kilda

*Phone:* +61 (4) 1861 8618

## **Chabad House East Bentleigh**

*Address:* 13-17 Cecil St., E Bentleigh

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9563 7935,  
+61 (3) 9563 8633 (mikvah),  
+61 (3) 9563 8221

## **Chabad House Glen Eira**

*Address:* 1/25 Bamba Rd., Caulfield

*Phone:* +61 (4) 0882 2770

## **Chabad House Malvern/Toorak Inc.**

*Address:* 316 Glenferrie Road, Malvern, Victoria, 3141

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9822 4985,  
+61 (3) 9822 1093

## **Chabad House Malvern/Toorak Inc.**

*Address:* 316 Glenferrie Road, Malvern, Victoria, 3141

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9822 4985,  
+61 (3) 9822 1093

## **Chabad of Melbourne**

*Address:* Suite 306, 227 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000 (Cnr Swanston St.)

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 8088,  
+61 (4) 1865 0770,  
+61 (3) 9525 8077

*Web:* [www.chabad.org.au](http://www.chabad.org.au)

## **City of Melbourne Synagogue**

*Address:* 488 Albert Street, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9662 1372,  
+61 (3) 9662 1843

*E-mail:* [office@](mailto:office@melbournecitysynagogue.com)

[melbournecitysynagogue.com](http://melbournecitysynagogue.com)

*Web:* [www.melbournecitysynagogue.com](http://www.melbournecitysynagogue.com)

## **East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation**

*President:* Dr. A. Davis

*Address:* 488 Albert Street, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9662 1372,  
+61 (3) 9848 1543,  
+61 (3) 9662 1843

*E-mail:* [office@](mailto:office@melbournecitysynagogue.com)

[melbournecitysynagogue.com](http://melbournecitysynagogue.com)

*Web:* [www.melbournecitysynagogue.com](http://www.melbournecitysynagogue.com)

## **Elsternwick Jewish Community**

*Address:* 2 Nagle Avenue, Elsternwick

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9530 3741

## **Elwood Talmud Torah**

*Address:* 39 Dickens Street, Elwood, Victoria, 3184

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9531 1547,  
+61 (3) 9531 6063

**Elwood Talmud Torah Congregation**

*Address:* 39 Dickens Street, Elwood,  
Victoria, 3184

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9531 1547,  
+61 (3) 9531 6063

**Emunah Religious Women's  
Organisation of Australia**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9166,  
+61 (3) 9527 5643,  
+61 (3) 9527 5665

**Hamakom**

*Address:* 62 Orrong Cres, N Caulfield  
*E-mail:* lubitz@bigpond.net.au

**Kehilat Nitzan**

*President:* Jim Landau  
*Address:* P.O. Box 276, Elwood, VIC  
3184, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (4) 1482 4745  
*E-mail:* info@kehillatnitzan.org.au  
*Web:* www.kehillatnitzan.org.au

**Kehillat David Hamelech (Kedem)**

*Address:* 117 Kooyong Rd., Armadale,  
Melbourne  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9513 5049,  
+61 (3) 9509 9358  
*E-mail:* president@kehillat-kedem.org,  
lionel@connexus.net.au

**Kew Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* 53 Walpole Street, Kew 3101  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9853 9243,  
+61 (3) 9853 1354

**Leo Baeck Centre for Progressive  
Judaism**

*Address:* 33-35 Harp Road, East Kew,

Melbourne, Victoria, 3102  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9819 7160,  
+61 (3) 9859 5417

*E-mail:* lbc@netspace.net.au  
*Web:* www.leobaeckcentre.org.au

**Melbourne Beth Din**

*Address:* 572 Inkerman Road, Caulfield,  
Victoria, 3161  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 8337

**Melbourne Chevra Kadisha**

*Address:* 115-119 Inkerman Street,  
St.Kilda, Victoria, 3182  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9534 0208,  
+61 (3) 9534 0370

*E-mail:* mck@bigpond.net.au  
*Web:* www.mck.org.au

**Melbourne Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* Cnr Toorak Rd. and Arnold St.,  
S Yarra  
*E-mail:* mhc@melbournesynagogue.org.au,  
jackies@melbournesynagogue.org.au  
*Web:* www.melbournesynagogue.org.au

**Melbourne Synagogue**

*Address:* Cnr Toorak Rd. and Arnold St.,  
S Yarra  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9866 2255  
*E-mail:* rabbi@melbournesynagogue.org.au  
*Web:* www.melbournesynagogue.org.au

**Mizrachi Australia Congregation**

*Address:* 81 Balaclava Road, N. Caulfield,  
Victoria, 3161  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9833,  
+61 (3) 9527 5665  
*Web:* www.mizrachi.org

**Mizrachi Synagogue**

*Address:* 81 Balaclava Road, N. Caulfield,  
Victoria 3161

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9833,  
+61 (3) 9527 5665  
*Web:* [www.mizrachi.org](http://www.mizrachi.org)

## **Moorabbin Hebrew Congregation & Synagogue**

*Address:* 960 Nepean Hwy, Moorabbin, Vic, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9553 3805  
*E-mail:* [moorabbin.shule@telstra.com](mailto:moorabbin.shule@telstra.com)  
*Web:* <http://moorabbinshule.tripod.com>

## **North Eastern – Yeshurun Congregation**

*Address:* 6 High Street, Doncaster, Victoria, 3108  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9891 6771  
*E-mail:* [nejc@bigpond.com](mailto:nejc@bigpond.com)

## **Rambam Sephardi Congregation**

*Address:* 90 Hotham St., E St. Kilda  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9527 8605

## **Sassoon Yehuda Sephardi Synagogue**

*Address:* 79 Hotham St., E St. Kilda  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9530 3052  
*E-mail:* [speak2us@sephardivic.org](mailto:speak2us@sephardivic.org)  
*Web:* [www.sephardivic.org](http://www.sephardivic.org)

## **South Caulfield Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* 47 Leopold St., S Caulfield, 3162  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9578 5922

## **Southern Jewish Community Congregation**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9578 5637  
*E-mail:* [melbourne02@hotmail.com](mailto:melbourne02@hotmail.com)

## **St Kilda Hebrew Congregation**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9537 1433,  
+61 (3) 9525 3759  
*E-mail:* [office@stkildashule.org](mailto:office@stkildashule.org)  
*Web:* [www.stkildashule.org](http://www.stkildashule.org)

## **St. Kilda Shule**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9537 1433,  
+61 (3) 9525 3759  
*E-mail:* [office@stkildashule.org](mailto:office@stkildashule.org)  
*Web:* [www.stkildashule.org](http://www.stkildashule.org)

## **Temple Beth Israel**

*President:* Mr. Joe Lewit  
([president@tbi.org.au](mailto:president@tbi.org.au))  
*Address:* 76 - 82 Alma Rd., St. Kilda 3182, Victoria, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9510 1488,  
+61 (3) 9521 1229  
*E-mail:* [president@tbi.org.au](mailto:president@tbi.org.au),  
[gersh.lazarow@tbi.org.au](mailto:gersh.lazarow@tbi.org.au)  
*Web:* [www.tbi.org.au](http://www.tbi.org.au)

## **Victorian Union for Progressive Judaism**

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*Phone:* +61 (3) 9510 1488,  
+61 (3) 9533 8587,  
+61 (3) 9521 1229  
*E-mail:* [jakfam@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jakfam@bigpond.net.au),  
[upj@bigpond.com](mailto:upj@bigpond.com)  
*Web:* [www.upj.org.au](http://www.upj.org.au)

### *MASS MEDIA*

## **«Ahavat Shalom»**

*Address:* 572 Inkerman Road, Caulfield, Melbourne, Victoria, 3161  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9492,  
+61 (3) 9527 8463  
*E-mail:* [admin@caulfieldshule.com](mailto:admin@caulfieldshule.com)  
*Web:* [www.caulfieldshule.com](http://www.caulfieldshule.com)

## **«Zichron Shlomo Newsletter»**

*Address:* 572 Inkerman Road, Caulfield, Melbourne, Victoria, 3161  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 9492,  
+61 (3) 9527 8463

*E-mail:* admin@caulfieldshule.com  
*Web:* www.caulfieldshule.com

### **Australian Jewish News**

*Address:* 193 Balaclava Road, Caulfield North, Melbourne 3161, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9525 8833,  
+61 (3) 9525 9060  
*E-mail:* ajn@jewishnews.net.au  
*Web:* www.ajn.com.au

### **Melbourne Chronicle**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9523 9817

### **Menora**

*Address:* P.O. Box 37, Balaclava, 3183  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9553 4917

### **St.Kilda Shule's Chronicle**

*Phone:* +61 (3) 9537 1433 ,  
+61 (3) 9525 3759  
*E-mail:* office@stkildashule.org  
*Web:* www.stkildashule.org

### **The Review**

*Editorial Chairman:* Dr. Colin Rubenstein  
*Address:* Level 1, 22 Albert Road, South Melbourne, VIC 3205  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9681 6660,  
+61 (3) 9681 6650  
*Web:* www.ajjac.org.au/main-pages/review\_frontp.html

### **Yiddish Language Program SBS Radio Melbourne**

*Address:* Yiddish Language Program, SBS Radio Melbourne, P.O. Box 294, South Melbourne, VIC 3205  
*Phone:* +61 (3) 9949 2121,  
+61 (3) 9949 2336,  
+61 (3) 9949 2385  
*E-mail:* yiddish.program@sbs.com.au

### **NEWCASTLE (NSW)**

#### *RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS*

### **Newcastle Hebrew Congregation Inc.**

*President:* David Gubbay  
*Address:* 122 Tyrrell Street, Newcastle, NSW 2300  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 4952 9853,  
+61 (2) 4953 9798

### **Newcastle Synagogue**

*Address:* 122 Tyrrell Street, Newcastle, NSW 2300

### **PERTH (WA)**

#### *EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*

### **Carmel School Kindergarten**

*Principal:* Ms. Lorraine Day  
*Address:* G. Korsunski-Carmel School and Seeligson Kindergarten Inc. Cresswell Road, Dianella, Western Australia 6059  
*Phone:* +61 (8) 9276 1644,  
+61 (8) 9276 3933  
*E-mail:* carmel@carmel.wa.edu.au  
*Web:* www.carmel.wa.edu.au

### **Dianella Shule**

*Address:* Ohel Shoshanna Papp, 68 Woodrow Avenue, Yokine  
*Web:* www.dianellashule.com.au

### **Sunday School**

*Address:* 28 Freedman Road, Menora Western, Australia, 6050  
*Phone:* +61 (8) 9271 0539,  
+61 (8) 9271 9455  
*E-mail:* phc@thepertshule.asn.au  
*Web:* www.thepertshule.asn.au

### **Western Australian Institute of Jewish Affairs**

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9242 3482

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

### **Australasian Union of Jewish Students**

Address: Perth, WA

E-mail: perth@aujs.com.au

Web: www.aujs.com.au/perth

### **Australian Jewish Genealogical Society**

Address: P.O. Box 225, Claremont, WA 6912

E-mail: urban1@iinet.net.au

Web: www.ajgs.org.au

### **Bnei Akiva**

Phone: +61 (8) 9375 2774

### **Council of Western Australian Jewry Inc.**

Phone: +61 (8) 9249 4948,

+61 (8) 9249 4968

E-mail: ron@wantree.com.au

### **Friends of Magen David Adom**

Address: MDA WA, Jewish Centre, 61 Woodrow Avenue

Phone: +61 (8) 9275 3313,

+61 (8) 9276 8330

Web: www.magenavidadom.org.au

### **Habonim Dror**

Phone: +61 (8) 9276 8252

### **Jewish Community Centre**

Address: 61 Woodrow Avenue, Yokine 6060

Phone: +61 (8) 9276 8572

### **Jewish Community Council of WA**

Phone: +61 (8) 9371 5300,

+61 (8) 8212 0077,

+61 (8) 9371 5300

E-mail: jewishcommcncl@bigpond.com

### **Jewish National Fund of Australia Inc**

Address: Jewish Centre, 61 Woodrow

Avenue, Yokine WA 6060

Phone: +61 (8) 9275 2761,

+61 (8) 9275 2761

E-mail: jnfwa@jnfaustralia.com.au

Web: www.jnfaustralia.com.au

### **Maccabi Perth**

E-mail: breckfam@arach.net.au,

ssilver@carmel.wa.edu.au

### **National Council of Jewish Women of Australia**

Address: c/o 61 Woodrow Ave., Yokine, WA 6060

Phone: +61 (8) 9276 8040,

+61 (8) 9276 8330

E-mail: ncjwwa@iinet.net.au

Web: www.ncjw.org.au

### **Perth Jewish Aged Home Society**

Society President: Mr. Carl Guenzl

Address: 119 Cresswell Road, Dianella 6059 WA

Phone: +61 (8) 9375 4600,

+61 (8) 9276 1250

E-mail: info@perthjewishaged.org.au,

president@perthjewishaged.org.au

Web: www.perthjewishaged.org.au

### **The Council of Christians and Jews, Western Australia Inc.**

Chairperson: Rowan Strong

(strong@socs.murdoch.edu.au)

Address: c/o 16 MossPaul Close  
Duncraig, Western Australia 6023

E-mail: strong@socs.murdoch.edu.au,

nhoffman@iinet.net.au

Web: www.ccjwa.iinet.net.au

### **The Kashrut Authority of Western Australia**

Address: Perth, Freedman Road, Menora

Phone: +61 (8) 9271 0539,

+61 (8) 9271 9455

*E-mail:* kawa@iinet.net.au

*Web:* <http://members.iinet.net.au/~kawa>

**Western Australian Friends  
of the Hebrew University  
of Jerusalem**

*President:* Dr. Jack Hoffman

*Address:* 87 Armadale Crescent, Mt.  
Lawley WA 6050

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9444 6640,  
+61 (8) 9444 6640

*E-mail:* [ssilbert@talbotolivier.com.au](mailto:ssilbert@talbotolivier.com.au)

*Web:* [www.austfhu.org.au](http://www.austfhu.org.au)

*OFFICIAL STRUCTURES OF ISRAEL*

**Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce**

*Address:* P.O. Locked Bag 3, Balcatta WA  
6021

*Phone:* +61 (4) 1993 8480,  
+61 (8) 9385 2042

*E-mail:* [perth@aicc.org.au](mailto:perth@aicc.org.au),  
[johnc@aicc.org.au](mailto:johnc@aicc.org.au)

*Web:* [www.aicc.org.au](http://www.aicc.org.au)

*RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS*

**Chabad Torah Foundation**

*Address:* 13, Bramwell Rd., Noranda,  
Perth, 6062 Western Australia

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9275 4912,  
+61 (8) 9275 8904

*E-mail:* [chabadwa@iinet.net.au](mailto:chabadwa@iinet.net.au)

**Dianella Shule**

*Address:* Ohel Shoshanna Papp, 68  
Woodrow Avenue, Yokine  
*Web:* [www.dianellashule.com.au](http://www.dianellashule.com.au)

**Northern Suburbs Hebrew  
Congregation**

*Address:* P.O. Box 1159, Morley, Western  
Australia 6943

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9275 3500,

+61 (8) 9275 3424

*Web:* <http://shul.iinet.net.au>

**Northern Suburbs Synagogue**

*Address:* P.O. Box 1159, Morley, Western  
Australia 6943

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9275 3500,  
+61 (8) 9275 3424

*Web:* <http://shul.iinet.net.au>

**Perth Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* 28 Freedman Road, Menora,  
Western Australia 6050

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9271 0539,  
+61 (8) 9271 9455

*E-mail:* [phc@thepertshshule.asn.au](mailto:phc@thepertshshule.asn.au)

*Web:* [www.thepertshshule.asn.au](http://www.thepertshshule.asn.au)

**Perth Synagogue**

*Address:* 28 Freedman Road, Menora,  
Western Australia 6050

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9271 0539,  
+61 (8) 9271 9455

*E-mail:* [rabbi@thepertshshule.asn.au](mailto:rabbi@thepertshshule.asn.au)

*Web:* [www.thepertshshule.asn.au](http://www.thepertshshule.asn.au)

**Temple David Congregation**

*Address:* 34 Clifton Crescent, Mt. Lawley  
WA 6050

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9271 1485,  
+61 (8) 9271 1485

*E-mail:* [temdavid@iinet.net.au](mailto:temdavid@iinet.net.au)

*Web:* [http://members.iinet.net.au/  
~temdavid](http://members.iinet.net.au/~temdavid)

**Temple David Synagogue**

*Address:* 34 Clifton Crescent, Mt. Lawley  
WA 6050

*Phone:* +61 (8) 9271 1485,  
+61 (8) 9271 1485

*E-mail:* [temdavid@iinet.net.au](mailto:temdavid@iinet.net.au)

*Web:* [http://members.iinet.net.au/  
~temdavid](http://members.iinet.net.au/~temdavid)

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*MASS MEDIA*

## **The Jewish Review**

*E-mail:* fradl@ozemail.com.au

*SYDNEY (NSW)*

*EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*

## **Archive of Australian Judaica**

*Address:* University of Sydney Library,

University of Sydney NSW 2006

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9351 4162,

+61 (2) 9351 4162

*E-mail:* m.dacy@library.usyd.edu.au

*Web:* <http://judaica.library.usyd.edu.au>

## **Australian Association of Jewish Studies**

*Address:* P.O. Box 233, Holme Building,

University of Sydney 2006

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9351 4162,

+61 (2) 9351 2890

*E-mail:* m.dacy@library.usyd.edu.au

## **Australian Institute for Holocaust Studies**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9389 1150,

+61 (2) 9369 2883

## **Australian Memories of the Holocaust**

*E-mail:* Resource.Centre@bje.nsw.edu.au,

bodnsw@tmx.com.au

*Web:* [www.holocaust.com.au](http://www.holocaust.com.au)

## **Brith Ivrit Olamit**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9327 7249

## **College of Adult Jewish Education**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9387 3822,

+61 (2) 9389 7652

## **Committee for Jewish Higher Education**

*Address:* C/o 146 Darlinghurst Road,  
Darlinghurst NSW 2010

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9360 1600,

+61 (2) 9331 4712

*Web:* [www.jca.org.au/organisations\\_ services.html](http://www.jca.org.au/organisations_services.html)

## **Eichel Chabad Hebrew School**

*Address:* 97 Killeaton Street, St. Ives,  
NSW 2075, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9488 9548,

+61 (2) 9488 8142

*E-mail:* rns@bigpond.net.au,

*Web:* [www.chabadhouse.org.au](http://www.chabadhouse.org.au)

## **Emanuel School**

*Address:* 20 Stanley St., Randwick NSW,  
Australia 2031

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9398 8388,

+61 (2) 9399 9351

*E-mail:* dsegal@tes.nsw.edu.au

*Web:* [www.tes.nsw.edu.au](http://www.tes.nsw.edu.au)

## **Jewish Educators Network**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9387 3555,

+61 (2) 9387 3490

## **Jewish Folk Centre**

*Address:* 23 Saber Street, Woollahra  
NSW 2025

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9389 3565,

+61 (2) 9369 3535

*E-mail:* [info@jewishfolkcentre.org.au](mailto:info@jewishfolkcentre.org.au)

*Web:* [www.jewishfolkcentre.org.au](http://www.jewishfolkcentre.org.au)

## **King David Preparatory School**

*Address:* 74 Dover Road, Rose Bay NSW 2029

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9371 8925,

+61 (2) 9371 8699

## **Makor-Sydney Library & Resources Centre (SZC)**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9360 6300,

+61 (2) 9360 6004

*E-mail:* [szcnsw@tmx.com.au](mailto:szcnsw@tmx.com.au)

**Mandelbaum House College**

*Address:* Mandelbaum House H67,  
University of Sydney, 385 Abercrombie St.

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9692 5200,  
+61 (2) 9692 5280

*E-mail:* mandelbaum@staff.usyd.edu.au

*Web:* www.usyd.edu.au/su/colleges/  
mandelbaum/shocked.html

**Masada College Lindfield Campus**

*Address:* 15 Treatts Rd., Lindfield NSW  
2070

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9416 8066,  
+61 (2) 9416 8066,  
+61 (2) 9416 6520

*E-mail:* primary@masada.nsw.edu.au

*Web:* www.masada.nsw.edu.au

**Masada College St. Ives Campus**

*Address:* 9–15 Link Rd., St. Ives NSW 2075

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9144 3722,  
+61 (2) 9449 3744,  
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*E-mail:* masada@masada.nsw.edu.au

*Web:* www.masada.nsw.edu.au

**Melton Adult Education Program**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9931 9659,  
+61 (2) 9313 7145

*E-mail:* melton@shalom.edu.au

**Moriah College**

*Address:* P.O. Box 986, Bondi Junction  
NSW 1355

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9387 3555,  
+61 (2) 9387 3490

*E-mail:* moriah@moriah.nsw.edu.au,  
enrolments@moriah.nsw.edu.au

*Web:* www.moriah.nsw.edu.au

**Moshe Menachim Library**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9488 9548,  
+61 (2) 9488 8142

**Mount Sinai College**

*Address:* 6 Runic Lane, Maroubra 2035,  
Sydney, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9349 4877,  
+61 (2) 9349 6727

*E-mail:* sinai@ozemail.com.au

*Web:* www.mountsinai.nsw.edu.au

**North Shore BPJE**

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NSW 2067

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9419 7011,  
+61 (2) 9413 1474

*E-mail:* nste@nste.org.au

**NSW Board****of Jewish Education**

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Sydney, NSW 2026, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 7900,  
+61 (2) 9365 0976

*E-mail:* administration@bj.e.nsw.edu.au

*Web:* www.bje.org.au

**NSW Board of Progressive Jewish  
Education**

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+61 (2) 9328 7833

*E-mail:* emanuel@ozemail.com.au,  
lynn@emanuel.org.au

**Program in Jewish Studies**

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International Relations,  
The University of New South Wales,  
Sydney 2052, Australia

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+61 (2) 9385 2381,  
+61 (2) 9385 1555

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jewishstudies

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## **Shalom College**

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+61 (2) 9313 7145  
*E-mail:* shalom@shalom.edu.au  
*Web:* www.shalomcollege.unsw.edu.au

## **Sunday School at NSW Board of Jewish Education**

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*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 7900,  
+61 (2) 9365 0976  
*E-mail:* Administration@bje.nsw.edu.au  
*Web:* www.bje.org.au

## **Temple Emanuel Kindergarten**

*Address:* 7 Ocean Street, Woollahra NSW 2025  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9363 1809,  
+61 (2) 9327 8775

## **The Great Jewish Audio & Video Library**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9387 3822,  
+61 (2) 9389 7652

## **The Jewish Learning Centre of Sydney**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 5667,  
+61 (2) 9365 3578  
*E-mail:* jlc@one.net.au

## **The NSTE Hebrew & Religion School**

*President:* Frank Wolf  
*Address:* North Shore Temple Emanuel, 28 Chatswood Avenue, Chatswood, Sydney  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9419 7011,  
+61 (2) 1232 3645,  
+61 (2) 9413 1474  
*E-mail:* nste@nste.org.au  
*Web:* www.nste.com.au

## *COMMUNITY STRUCTURES*

## **AM Rosenblum Jewish Museum**

*Address:* 166 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9267 2477,  
+61 (2) 9264 8871  
*E-mail:* museum@greatsynagogue.org.au  
*Web:* www.greatsynagogue.org.au

## **Australasian Jewish Medical Federation (NSW)**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9326 2976

## **Australasian Union of Jewish Students**

*Address:* Shalom College, UNSW, NSW 2052  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9662 4855,  
+61 (2) 9663 4868  
*E-mail:* sydney@aujs.com.au  
*Web:* www.aujs.com.au

## **Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC)**

*National Chairman:* Mark Leibler  
*Address:* 146 Darlinghurst Road, Sydney NSW 2010  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9360 5415,  
+61 (2) 9360 5416  
*E-mail:* aijac@aijac.org.au,  
crubenstein@aijac.org.au  
*Web:* www.aijac.org.au

## **Australia/Israel Society for Cultural Exchange**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 1955,  
+61 (2) 9365 5527

## **Australian Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors & Descendants**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9361 3678;  
+61 (2) 9331 4245  
*E-mail:* fostergh@bigpond.com.au

**Australasian Foundation for Jewish  
Community Services**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9369 1400,  
+61 (2) 9369 5455

**Australian Friends of Tel Aviv  
University**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9649 5357,  
+61 (2) 9387 6337

**Australian Friends of the Hebrew  
University of Jerusalem**

*President:* Mr. Robert Simons  
*Address:* 25 Pelican Street, Darlinghurst  
NSW 2010, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9267 7144,  
+61 (2) 9332 4060,  
+61 (2) 9267 2148 / 9332 4134  
*E-mail:* nswfhu@austfhu.org.au,  
fhusyd@tpg.com  
*Web:* www.austfhu.org.au

**Australian Jewish Genealogical  
Society**

*Address:* P.O. Box 42, Lane Cove NSW  
1595, Sydney, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9967 2834  
*E-mail:* president@ajgs.org.au,  
research@ajgs.org.au  
*Web:* www.ajgs.org.au

**Australian Jewish Historical Society**

*Address:* Level 2, Mandelbaum House,  
385 Abercrombie St., Darlington, NSW  
2008, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9518 7596  
*E-mail:* ajhs@ozemail.com.au

**Australian Parents of Olim**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9327 1724

**Australian Technion Society**

*Address:* Australian Technion Society,

Level 1, 2 Bruce St. Waterloo, New  
South Wales 2014

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 6178,  
+61 (2) 9245 1246

*E-mail:* grahamlevy@msn.com.au

*Web:* www.austechnion.com

**B'nai B'rith Australia and New Zealand**

*Address:* P.O. Box 443, Kings Cross, NSW  
1340

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9361 3875,  
+61 (2) 9361 6035,  
+61 (2) 9331 3131

*E-mail:* bbozdist@ozemail.com.au

*Web:* www.bnaibrith.org.au

**Beitar Sydney Youth Movement**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9130 8230  
*E-mail:* betarsydney@hotmail.com  
*Web:* www.au.betar.org

**B'nai B'rith Parents Homes (NSW) Ltd.  
(Eastern Suburbs)**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9371 4069

**B'nai B'rith Parents Homes (NSW) Ltd.  
(North Shore)**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9489 5670

**Bnei Akiva**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9130 6026

**Chabad House of the North Shore**

*Address:* 97 Killeaton Street, St. Ives,  
NSW 2075, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9488 9548,  
+61 (2) 9488 8142

*E-mail:* info@chabadhouse.org.au

*Web:* www.chabadhouse.org.au

**Chessed**

*Address:* c/o 172 Oxford St., Woollahra, 2025

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9369 4486,

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

+61 (2) 9797 9646

*E-mail:* lands@rpi.net.au

*Web:* www.join.org.au/chessed

## **Child Survivors of the Holocaust Group**

*E-mail:* child\_survivors\_group@hotmail.com

## **Eastern Jewish Association**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9371 9363

## **Federation of Australian Jewish Ex-Service Associations**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9361 5539,

+61 (2) 9360 9712

## **Friends of Magen David Adom**

*Phone:* +61 (4) 1312 1218,

+61 (2) 9328 5197,

+61 (2) 9328 5498

*E-mail:* NSW@magendavidadom.org.au

*Web:* www.magendavidadom.org.au

## **Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 2777,

+61 (2) 9365 5506

*E-mail:* ryul@bigpond.net.au

## **Friends of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 1955,

+61 (2) 9365 5527

## **Habonim Dror**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9389 3663,

+61 (2) 9360 6004

## **Help In Need Society**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9879 2777,

+61 (2) 9879 2700

## **Hillel**

*Address:* Shalom College, UNSW, Barker

St., Kensington 2052, NSW Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9931 9698,

+61 (2) 9313 7145

*E-mail:* bryfy@hillel.com.au

*Web:* www.hillel.com.au

## **Hineni Youth and Welfare Australia**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9369 2918,

+61 (2) 9389 5418

*E-mail:* hineni@centralsynagogue.com.au

*Web:* www.centralsynagogue.com.au

## **Israel Aliyah Centre**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9360 2368,

+61 (2) 9380 5124

## **Jewish Arts & Culture Council**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9371 7782,

+61 (2) 9371 3910

## **Jewish Care**

*Address:* Sydney, Australia, Fischl House,  
4a Nelson Street, Woollahra 2025

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9302 8000,

+61 (2) 9302 8028,

+61 (2) 9302 8001

*E-mail:* info@jewishcare.com.au

*Web:* www.jewishcare.com.au

## **Jewish Cemetery Trust Necropolis**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9299 6860,

+61 (2) 9299 4020

*E-mail:* thesecretary@

jewishcemeterytrust.com.au

## **Jewish Centre on Ageing (COA)**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9389 0035,

+61 (2) 9369 3535

*E-mail:* coa@zip.com.au

## **Jewish Communal Appeal**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9360 2344,

+61 (2) 9332 4854

*E-mail:* [jca@jca.org.au](mailto:jca@jca.org.au)  
*Web:* [www.jca.org.au](http://www.jca.org.au)

**Jewish National Fund  
of Australia Inc**

*State President:* Mr. Peter Smaller  
*Address:* Level 14, Westfield Tower 2,  
Cnr of Grafton & Grosvenor Streets,  
Bondi Junction NSW 2022  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9389 5466,  
+61 (2) 9386 9559,  
+61 (2) 9389 5330  
*E-mail:* [info@jnfaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@jnfaustralia.com.au)  
*Web:* [www.jnfaustralia.com.au](http://www.jnfaustralia.com.au)

**JNF Environmental Association of  
Australia**

*Address:* Level 14, Westfield Tower 2,  
Cnr of Grafton & Grosvenor Streets,  
Bondi Junction NSW 2022  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9389 5466,  
+61 (2) 9389 5330  
*E-mail:* [jfnfnsw@tmx.com.au](mailto:jfnfnsw@tmx.com.au)

**Keren Mishpachot Hagiborim  
Incorporated**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9327 3849,  
+61 (2) 9560 9707

**Kosher Consumers Association**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9416 4553,  
+61 (2) 9388 1158  
*E-mail:* [vr@sydney.net](mailto:vr@sydney.net)  
*Web:* [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/  
KCA\\_Sydney](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/KCA_Sydney)

**Maccabi New South Wales**

*Address:* 61-67 Hall St., Bondi Beach  
2026  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9300 0783,  
+61 (2) 9130 8707  
*E-mail:* [info@maccabi.com.au](mailto:info@maccabi.com.au)  
*Web:* [www.maccabi.com.au](http://www.maccabi.com.au)

**Menorah Long Day  
Care Centre**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9337 2021,  
+61 (2) 9337 5027  
*E-mail:* [Menorah@magnet.com.au](mailto:Menorah@magnet.com.au)

**Mikvah Society**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9130 2509

**Minyan Lekeruv Leavovt**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9130 6026

**National Council of Jewish Women of  
Australia**

*Address:* NCJW NSW Section Inc., P.O.  
Box 57, Woollahra, NSW 1350  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9363 0257,  
+61 (2) 9362 4092  
*E-mail:* [admin@ncjwnsw.org](mailto:admin@ncjwnsw.org)  
*Web:* [www.ncjw.org.au](http://www.ncjw.org.au)

**Network**

*Address:* C/o Shalom College, UNSW,  
Sydney, 2052, NSW, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9697 9242,  
+61 (2) 9313 7145  
*E-mail:* [info@network.org.au](mailto:info@network.org.au)  
*Web:* [www.network.org.au](http://www.network.org.au)

**New South Wales**

**Jewish Board of Deputies**

*President:* Stephen Rothman  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9360 1600,  
+61 (4) 1438 9551  
*E-mail:* [Virginia.Gordon@nswjbd.com](mailto:Virginia.Gordon@nswjbd.com)  
*Web:* [www.nswjbd.org](http://www.nswjbd.org)

**NSW Friends of Bezalel  
Academy of Arts & Design  
Jerusalem**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9388 1161,  
+61 (2) 9388 1030  
*E-mail:* [sevelsimons@iprimus.com.au](mailto:sevelsimons@iprimus.com.au)

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **NSW Jewish War Memorial Centre**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9331 5071,  
+61 (2) 9360 9712

## **NSW Kashrut Authority**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 2933,  
+61 (2) 9369 4286,  
+61 (2) 9365 0933 / 9369 4329

*E-mail:* nswka@ozemail.com.au,  
rabbig@ka.org.au

*Web:* www.ka.org.au

## **Rainbow Kehilah – The Northern River Jewish Community**

*Address:* P.O. Box 1969, Byron Bay NSW 2481, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 6685 4440,  
+61 (2) 6685 9850,  
+61 (2) 6685 4440

*E-mail:* rkc@byronss.com.au

*Web:* www.byronss.com.au/rk

## **Sephardi Federation of Australian Jewry**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9130 3192,  
+61 (2) 9365 3856

## **Shalom Aleichem Blue Mountains**

*Address:* P.O. Box 25, Katoomba 2780

*Phone:* +61 (2) 4782 3471,  
+61 (2) 4782 2888,  
+61 (2) 4782 4835

*E-mail:* hhginges@pnc.com.au

## **Southern Highlands Jewish Community**

*President:* Dr. David Wilson

*Address:* P.O. Box 2140 Bowral 2576

*Phone:* +61 (2) 4861 3384,  
+61 (2) 4861 3384

## **Sydney Chevra Kadisha**

*Address:* Woollahra 172 Oxford St. (Cnr Wallis St.)

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9363 2248,  
+61 (2) 9327 3889

## **Sydney Jewish Choral Society Inc.**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9326 1642,  
+61 (2) 9362 4565

## **Sydney Jewish Museum**

*Address:* 148 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst, NSW, Australia 2010

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9360 7999,  
+61 (2) 9331 4245

*E-mail:* admin@sjm.com.au,  
education@sjm.com.au

*Web:* www.sydneyjewishmuseum.com.au

## **The Australian Reform Zionist Organisation NSW**

*Phone:* +61 (4) 1387 1231,  
+61 (2) 9328 1883

*E-mail:* peterfr@ozemail.com.au

*Web:* www.arzi.org

## **The Council of Christians and Jews New South Wales**

*Address:* Reg. Office: 2 Devine St., Erskineville, NSW 2043

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9351 4162,  
+61 (2) 9351 2890

*Web:* www.ccj-australia.iccj.org/nsw

## **The Hakoah Club Limited**

*Address:* 61 - 67 Hall Street, Bondi, Sydney, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9130 3344,  
+61 (2) 9130 8707

*E-mail:* myclub@hakoah.com.au

*Web:* www.hakoah.com.au

## **The Isabella Lazarus Children's Home**

*Address:* 120 High Street, Hunters Hill NSW 2110

Phone: +61 (2) 9879 2777,  
+61 (2) 9879 2700

**The Jewish House Crisis Centre Inc**

Phone: +61 (2) 9386 0770,  
+61 (2) 9387 7729

E-mail: [jhcc@tig.com.au](mailto:jhcc@tig.com.au)

**The Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home**

Address: Hal Goldstein Campus, 120  
High Street, Hunters Hill 2110

Phone: +61 (2) 9879 2777,  
+61 (2) 9879 2700

E-mail: [sirmoses@montefiorehome.com.au](mailto:sirmoses@montefiorehome.com.au)

Web: [www.montefiorehome.com.au](http://www.montefiorehome.com.au)

**The Sydney Eruv**

Phone: +61 (2) 9990 4982

E-mail: [info@sydneyeruv.org.au](mailto:info@sydneyeruv.org.au),  
[eitanfranklin@yahoo.com](mailto:eitanfranklin@yahoo.com)

Web: [www.sydneyeruv.org.au](http://www.sydneyeruv.org.au)

**United Israel Appeal (Federal)**

Phone: +61 (2) 9380 5157,  
+61 (2) 9380 5279

E-mail: [mildredteitler@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mildredteitler@ozemail.com.au)

**United Israel Appeal (NSW)**

Phone: +61 (2) 9361 4273,  
+61 (2) 9331 3170

E-mail: [uiaadmin@uiansw.com.au](mailto:uiaadmin@uiansw.com.au)

**Wolper Jewish Hospital**

Address: 8 Trelawney Street, Woollahra  
NSW 2025, Australia

Phone: +61 (2) 9328 6077,  
+61 (2) 9327 5973

E-mail: [info@wolper.com.au](mailto:info@wolper.com.au)

Web: [www.wolper.com.au](http://www.wolper.com.au)

**Women's International Zionist  
Organisations**

Phone: +61 (2) 9387 3666,

+61 (2) 9386 4444,

+61 (2) 9387 5373

E-mail: [wizo@wizo.org.au](mailto:wizo@wizo.org.au),

[wizofed@wizo.org.au](mailto:wizofed@wizo.org.au)

Web: [www.wizo.org.au](http://www.wizo.org.au)

**Woollahra Montefiore Home**

Address: Cnr Nelson and Wallis Streets,  
Woollahra 2025

Phone: +61 (2) 9362 3777,  
+61 (2) 9362 3504

E-mail: [moseswol@montefiorehome.com.au](mailto:moseswol@montefiorehome.com.au)

Web: [www.montefiorehome.com.au](http://www.montefiorehome.com.au)

**Yad L'Yad Inc.**

Phone: +61 (2) 9369 1919,

+61 (2) 9387 2218

**Youth Aliyah**

Phone: +61 (2) 9331 1258

**Zionist Federation of Australia**

Address: 146 Darlinghurst Road,  
Darlinghurst NSW 2010, Sydney,  
Australia

Phone: +61 (2) 9360 6300,  
+61 (2) 9360 6004

Web: [www.zfa.com.au](http://www.zfa.com.au)

*OFFICIAL STRUCTURES OF ISRAEL*

**Australia-Israel Chamber of  
Commerce (NSW)**

Address: 395 New South Head Road,  
Double Bay NSW 2028

Phone: +61 (2) 9326 1700,  
+61 (2) 9326 1676

E-mail: [sydney@aicc.org.au](mailto:sydney@aicc.org.au),  
[anthony@aicc.org.au](mailto:anthony@aicc.org.au)

*RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS*

**Adath Yisroel Congregation – Bondi**

Phone: +61 (2) 9300 9447

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Beit Yisrael Abihsera – Baba Sali**

*Address:* 666 Old South Head Rd., Rose Bay

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9337 2143

## **Bet Yosef (The Caro Synagogue)**

*Address:* 243 Old South Head Road,  
Bondi, 2026

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9369 5460,

+61 (2) 9363 4306

*E-mail:* meyer@urgentmail.com,  
info@betyosef.org.au

## **Beth Din Tzedek of Sydney and NSW**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9387 3822,

+61 (2) 9389 7652

## **Central Coast Kadimah Jewish Congregation**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 4340 2014

## **Central Coast Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation**

*Address:* 1 Roland Close, Terrigal NSW 2260

*Phone:* +61 (2) 4389 8854,

+61 (2) 4389 8864

*E-mail:* msanig@ozemail.com.au

## **Chabad House of the Israeli Community**

*Phone:* +61 (4) 0311 3005

## **Chabad House of the North Shore Congregation**

*Address:* 97 Killeaton Street, St. Ives,  
NSW 2075, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9488 9548,

+61 (2) 9488 8142

*E-mail:* rns@bigpond.net.au,  
info@chabadhouse.org.au

*Web:* www.chabadhouse.org.au

## **Chabad House of the North Shore Shule (Beit Menachem Synagogue)**

*Address:* 97 Killeaton Street, St. Ives,

NSW 2075, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9488 9548,

+61 (2) 9488 8142

*E-mail:* rns@bigpond.net.au,  
info@chabadhouse.org.au

*Web:* www.chabadhouse.org.au

## **Chabad Lubavich House of Bondi Beach**

*Address:* 25 O'Brien Street, Bondi,  
Sydney NSW

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 2777,

+61 (2) 9365 5506

*E-mail:* ryul@bigpond.net.au

## **Coogee Synagogue**

*Address:* 121 Brook Street, Coogee, NSW

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9664 1221,

+61 (2) 9315 8291

## **Council of Progressive Rabbis in Sydney**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9328 7833,

+61 (2) 9327 8715

*E-mail:* emanuel@ozemail.com.au

## **Cremorne Congregation**

*Address:* 12a Yeo Street, Neutral Bay,  
Sydney, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9427 2182,

+61 (2) 9908 1853

*E-mail:* mdoobov@bigpond.net.au

*Web:* www.join.org.au/cremorne-  
synagogue

## **Cremorne Synagogue**

*Address:* 12a Yeo Street, Neutral Bay,  
Sydney, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9427 2182,

+61 (2) 9908 1853

*E-mail:* mdoobov@bigpond.net.au

*Web:* www.join.org.au/cremorne-  
synagogue

**Dover Heights Congregation**

Address: corner of Blake and Napier Streets,  
Dover Heights, New South Wales, Australia

Phone: +61 (2) 9371 8682,  
+61 (4) 1826 6487

Web: [www.doverheightsshule.com](http://www.doverheightsshule.com)

**Dover Heights Shule**

Address: corner of Blake and Napier  
Streets, Dover Heights, New South  
Wales, Australia

Phone: +61 (2) 9371 8682,  
+61 (4) 1826 6487

Web: [www.doverheightsshule.com](http://www.doverheightsshule.com)

**Israel Chabad Synagogue Beith  
Hakneset L'Israel**

Phone: +61 (2) 9387 3822,  
+61 (2) 9389 7652

**JCC Chabad Double Bay**

Address: 21-337 New South Head Road,  
Double Bay, Sydney

Phone: +61 (2) 9327 1644

E-mail: [chabdbay@fast.net.au](mailto:chabdbay@fast.net.au)

**Kehillat Masada**

President: Ronnie Moss

Address: 9-15 Link Road, St Ives, Sydney,  
NSW 2075, Australia

Phone: +61 (2) 9988 4417,  
+61 (2) 9449 3897

E-mail: [kmasada@dingoblue.net.au](mailto:kmasada@dingoblue.net.au),  
[rabdaf@yahoo.com](mailto:rabdaf@yahoo.com)

**Kehillat Moriah Synagogue**

Address: Hugo Lowy Synagogue, Moriah  
College, Queens Park Road, Queens Park

Phone: +61 (2) 9387 3555,  
+61 (2) 9369 1483

**Maroubra Synagogue**

Address: 635 Anzac Pde, Maroubra,

Sydney

Phone: +61 (2) 9344 6095,  
+61 (2) 9344 4298

E-mail: [maroubrasyn@bigpond.com.au](mailto:maroubrasyn@bigpond.com.au)

**Mizrachi Synagogue**

Address: 339 Old South Head Road,  
Bondi, Sydney 2026, Australia

Phone: +61 (2) 9130 7221,  
+61 (2) 9130 7221

E-mail: [office@mizrachi.org.au](mailto:office@mizrachi.org.au),  
[mizrachisydney@bigpond.com](mailto:mizrachisydney@bigpond.com)

Web: [www.mizrachi.org](http://www.mizrachi.org)

**Newton Synagogue**

Address: 20 Georgina Street, Newtown  
NSW 2042 Sydney, Australia

Phone: +61 (2) 9550 1192,  
+61 (4) 1746 2870

E-mail: [info@newtownsynagogue.com](mailto:info@newtownsynagogue.com)

Web: [www.geocities.com/Athens/  
Cyprus/8144](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Cyprus/8144)

**North Shore Temple Emanuel**

President: Frank Wolf

Address: North Shore Temple Emanuel,  
28 Chatswood Avenue, Chatswood,  
Sydney

Phone: +61 (2) 9419 7011,  
+61 (2) 1232 3645,  
+61 (2) 9413 1474

E-mail: [nste@nste.org.au](mailto:nste@nste.org.au)

Web: [www.nste.com.au](http://www.nste.com.au)

**Or Chadash Minyan**

Address: Academy BJE Building, 56  
Roscoe St., Bondi

Phone: +61 (4) 1382 0008

E-mail: [orchadash@hotmail.com](mailto:orchadash@hotmail.com)

**Organisation of Rabbis of Australasia**

Phone: +61 (2) 9389 5622,  
+61 (2) 9387 2939

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Parramatta Synagogue**

*Address:* 116 Victoria Road, Parramatta,  
Sydney, NSW

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9683 5626,  
+61 (4) 2101 3796,  
+61 (2) 9683 5626

*E-mail:* sdiveroli@student.usyd.edu.au

## **Rabbinical Council of New South Wales**

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9369 4286,  
+61 (2) 9369 4329

## **Roscoe Street Synagogue**

*Address:* Roscoe Street Synagogue,  
Bondi, Sydney NSW

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9365 1812

## **Sephardi Synagogue**

*Address:* 40-44 Fletcher St., Woollahra  
2025, Sydney, NSW

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9389 3982,  
+61 (2) 9389 3355,  
+61 (2) 9369 2143

*E-mail:* sephardi@cherry.com.au

## **South Head Synagogue**

*Address:* 662 Old South Head Road, Rose  
Bay, 2029, NSW Australia.

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9337 6775,  
+61 (2) 9388 7773

*E-mail:* rabbi@southhead.org

*Web:* www.southhead.org

## **Southern Sydney Synagogue**

*Address:* Cnr Railway Pd. & Noble St.,  
Allawah

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9587 5643

*E-mail:* turtle@ign.com.au,  
info@southern Sydneysynagogue.org

## **Strathfield and District Hebrew Congregation**

*Address:* 19 Florence St., Strathfield,

Sydney, NSW

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9642 4803,  
+61 (2) 9642 4803

*E-mail:* desamy@bigpond.com

## **Sydney Beth Din**

*Address:* 166 Castlereagh Street, Sydney  
NSW 2000, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9267 2477,  
+61 (2) 9264 8871

*E-mail:* admin@greatsynagogue.org.au

*Web:* www.greatsynagogue.org.au

## **Temple Emanuel**

*Address:* 7 Ocean Street, Woollahra,  
NSW 2025 Sydney, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9328 7833,  
+61 (2) 9327 8715

*E-mail:* info@emanuel.org.au

*Web:* www.emanuel.org.au

## **The Central Synagogue**

*Address:* 15 Bon Accord Ave., Bondi  
Junction NSW 2022, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9389 5622,  
+61 (2) 9389 5418

*E-mail:* central@centralsynagogue.com.au

*Web:* www.centralsynagogue.com.au

## **The Great Synagogue**

*Address:* 166 Castlereagh Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000, Australia

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9267 2477,  
+61 (2) 9264 8871

*E-mail:* admin@greatsynagogue.org.au

*Web:* www.greatsynagogue.org.au

## **The Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Synagogue**

*Address:* Hal Goldstein Campus, 120  
High Street, Hunters Hill 2110

*Phone:* +61 (2) 9879 2777,  
+61 (2) 9879 2700

*E-mail:* sirmoses@montefiorehome.com.au  
*Web:* www.montefiorehome.com.au

### **The Stiebell**

*Address:* 49 Bellevue Rd., Bellevue Hill,  
NSW, 2023  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9363 5543  
*E-mail:* shtiebell@chinuch.com.au

#### *MASS MEDIA*

### **Australian Jewish News**

*Address:* 146 Darlinghurst Road,  
Darlinghurst, Sydney 2010, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9360 5100,  
+61 (2) 9332 4207  
*E-mail:* ajn@jewishnews.net.au  
*Web:* www.ajn.com.au

### **Monthly Magazine "TELL"**

*Address:* 7 Ocean Street, Woollahra,  
NSW 2025 Sydney, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9328 7833,  
+61 (2) 9327 8715  
*E-mail:* info@emanuel.org.au  
*Web:* www.emanuel.org.au

### **The Chronicle**

*Address:* 12a Yeo Street, Neutral Bay,  
Sydney, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9427 2182  
*E-mail:* mdoobov@bigpond.net.au  
*Web:* www.join.org.au/cremorne-  
synagogue

### **The Community Site for Jews and Israelis in Australia**

*Web:* www.hamerkaz.com.au

### **Yiddish Language Program SBS Radio Sydney 1107am**

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028, Crows Nest, NSW 1585, Australia  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 9430 2828,

+61 (2) 9430 2732,

+61 (2) 9438 1114

*E-mail:* yiddish.program@sbs.com.au,  
nitza.lowenstein@sbs.com.au

*Web:* www.sbs.com.au

#### **WOLLONGONG (NSW)**

#### *COMMUNITY STRUCTURES*

### **Australasian Union of Jewish**

#### **Students**

*Address:* P.O. Box 100, University of  
Wollongong, NSW 2500  
*Phone:* +61 (2) 4221 3797,  
+61 (4) 2526 5007  
*Web:* http://clubs.uow.edu.au/  
websites/aujs

#### **ARMENIA**

### **Jewish Community in Armenia**

*Chairperson:* **Rimma Varzhapetian-  
Feller**

*Address:* 2/1-49, Griboyedov Street,  
Yerevan 375051 Armenia

*Phone:* 374-10 236533,  
236528

*Fax:* 374-10 534854,  
534924

*E-mail:* jewish\_arm@netsys.am,  
rimma\_feller@mail.ru

*Web:* www.jewish.am

### **Jewish Religious Center of Armenia (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi of Armenia:* rabbi Hirsh-Meir  
Burshtein

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Yerevan 375018 Armenia

*Phone:* 374-10 525305

*Fax:* 374-10 566556

*E-mail:* burger@arminco.com

*Web:* www.yehudim.am

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Sevan Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Abram Korolev  
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378610 Armenia  
*Phone:* 374-762 21261

## **Vanadzor Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Ludmila Ayvazian  
*Address:* 79-13, Tigran Metz Ave.,  
Vanadzor 377201 Armenia  
*Phone:* 374-573 21196  
*Fax:* 374-573 44663

## **Yerevan Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi of Armenia:* rabbi Hirsh-Meir  
Burshtein  
*Director:* Vladimir Kishinevsky  
*Address:* 23, Nar-Dosi Street, Yerevan  
375018 Armenia  
*Phone:* 374-10 571968, 571556, 571677,  
526258  
*Fax:* 374-10 554132  
*Web:* www.yehudim.am

## **Yerevan Jewish Welfare Centre Hesed Orot**

*Director:* Leya Premysler  
*Address:* 23, Nar-Dos Street, Yerevan  
375018 Armenia  
*Phone:* 374-10 571677  
*Fax:* 374-10 554132

## **AZERBAIJAN**

## **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Representative office in Azerbaijan**

*Representative:* Max Wiesel  
*Director:* Lala Karakashli  
*Address:* 5-39, Hagani Street, Baku  
Azerbaijan  
*Phone:* 994-12 493-1385

*Fax:* 994-12 493-6354  
*E-mail:* general@jdc.in-baku.com

## **Baku Hillel**

*Director:* Ilona Azimbekova  
*Address:* 22, Sarafaliev Street, Baku  
AZ1010 Azerbaijan  
*Phone:* 994-12 598-0453/55/56/57  
*E-mail:* hillel\_baku@mail.ru  
*Web:* www.hillel-baku.clan.su

## **Baku Jewish Community Center**

*Chairman of Board:* Alexander  
Sharovsky  
*Director:* Vitaly Katz  
*E-mail:* jcc@jch.in-baku.com  
*Web:* www.jcc-baku.org.az

## **Baku Jewish Day School Chabad Or Avner**

*Principal:* Zakay Shayev  
*Address:* 14, Ali Mustafaejev Street,  
Baku AZ1111 Azerbaijan  
*Phone:* 994-12 530-1273  
*E-mail:* leznik\_emil@rambler.ru  
*Web:* www.oravner.com/baku

## **Embassy of the State of Israel in Azerbaijan Republic**

*Ambassador:* Arthur Lenk  
*Address:* Hyatt Tower, 3, Izmir Street,  
Baku 1033 Azerbaijan  
*Phone:* 994-12 490-7881/2  
*Fax:* 994-12 490-7892  
*E-mail:* info@baku.mfa.gov.il  
*Web:* baku.mfa.gov.il

## **Israeli Cultural Center in Baku**

*Director:* Rimma Barkan  
*Address:* 112, Dilyara Aliyeva Street,  
Baku Azerbaijan  
*Phone:* 994-12 494-0740  
*E-mail:* bakuicc@il4.org.il

Web: [www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/Baku](http://www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/Baku)

**Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI),  
Representative office in Azerbaijan**

Address: Baku, Azerbaijan

Phone: 994-12 447-2457

Fax: 994-12 447-2477

E-mail: [office@jafi.az](mailto:office@jafi.az)

Web: [www.jafi.az](http://www.jafi.az)

**Jewish Community of Azerbaijan  
(Chabad)**

Chief rabbi of Azerbaijan: rabbi Meir Bruk

Chairman: Gennady Zelmanovich

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AZ1111 Azerbaijan

Phone: 994-12 530-1273, 530-2578

Fax: 994-12 530-0508

E-mail: [meirbrokaz@gmail.com](mailto:meirbrokaz@gmail.com),  
[zelmanovich@mail.ru](mailto:zelmanovich@mail.ru)

Web: [www.jewish.az](http://www.jewish.az)

**Kuba Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Rabbi: rabbi Yonah Ronen Yakubov

Address: 26, Hussein Street, Krasnaya  
Sloboda 373166 Azerbaijan

E-mail: [iza169@zahav.net.co.il](mailto:iza169@zahav.net.co.il)

Web: [www.kuba4.narod.ru](http://www.kuba4.narod.ru)

**Sumgait Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Rabbi: rabbi Menachem Mendel Leichter

Address: Sumgait Azerbaijan

E-mail: [Menachem\\_lr@hotmail.co.il](mailto:Menachem_lr@hotmail.co.il)

**REPUBLIC OF BELARUS**

**American Jewish Joint Distribution  
Committee (AJJDC), Representative  
office in Belarus**

Representative: Yoni Leifer

Address: 22, Vera Horuzhay Street,  
Minsk 220123 Belarus

Phone: 375-17 237-4175

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E-mail: [general@joint.by](mailto:general@joint.by)

**Belarus Union of Ghetto Survivors**

President: Mikhail Treister

Address: 28, Vera Horuzhay Street,  
Minsk 220123 Belarus

Phone: 375-17 286-7874

E-mail: [rc@meod.by](mailto:rc@meod.by)

Web: [www.meod.by](http://www.meod.by)

**Belarusian Union of WWII Jewish  
Veterans**

President: Alexander Budnitsky

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Minsk 220123 Belarus

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E-mail: [rc@meod.by](mailto:rc@meod.by)

Web: [www.meod.by](http://www.meod.by)

**Embassy of the State of Israel  
in Republic of Belarus**

Ambassador: Zeev Ben-Arie

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Belarus

Phone: 375-17 298-4392,  
298-4401/2

Fax: 375-17 298-4403

E-mail: [info@minsk.mfa.gov.il](mailto:info@minsk.mfa.gov.il)

Web: [minsk.mfa.gov.il](http://minsk.mfa.gov.il)

**Israeli Cultural and Information  
Center**

Director: Yigal Koyfman

Address: 3, Uralskaya Street, Minsk  
Belarus

Phone: 375-17 230-1874,  
230-6632

Fax: 375-17 299-0952

E-mail: [mimskicc@il4u.org.il](mailto:mimskicc@il4u.org.il)

Web: [www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/Minsk/](http://www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/Minsk/)

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in Belarus**

*Head of delegation:* Igor Giterman

*Address:* Minsk Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 298-3326,  
289-3815

*E-mail:* misrad@jafi.info

*Web:* www.jafi.ru

## **ORT Belarus**

*Director:* Anatoly Grinberg

*Address:* 86, Peter Glebka Street, Minsk  
220104 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 221-0602

*Web:* www.ort.by

## **Orthodox Union of Religious Jewish Congregations in Belarus**

*President:* Yuri Dorn

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Avraham Benenson

*Address:* 13-B Dauman Street, Minsk  
Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 334-7048,  
334-5612

*Fax:* 375-17 334-3360

*E-mail:* iro@open.by

*Web:* www.jewishbelarus.com

## **Religious Union of Progressive Judaism in Belarus**

*President:* Yakov Basin

*Rabbi:* Gregory Abramovich

*Executive director:* Mikhail Kemerov

*Address:* 4-18, Kuzma Chorny Lane,  
Minsk 220000 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 206-5850,  
220-2276

*E-mail:* roopi@mail.ru,  
menorah@rambler.ru

## **Union of Belarus Jewish Organizations and Communities (Vaad)**

*President:* Leonid Levin

*Executive Director:* Victoria Brumina

*Address:* 28, Vera Khoruzhay Street,  
Minsk 220123 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 286-7933

*Fax:* 375-17 334-1547

*E-mail:* ubjoc@meod.by

*Web:* www.meod.by

## **Union of Jewish Religious Communities of Republic of Belarus (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Zvi Kaplan

*Director:* Sholom Malinkin

*Address:* 22-12, Kommunisticheskaya  
Street, Minsk 220029 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 354-8510,  
334-2273,

237-4817

*E-mail:* ujrcrb@mail.ru

### *MINSK*

## **Jewish museum of Belarus**

*Director:* Inna Gerasimova

*Address:* 28, Vera Horuzhay Street,  
Minsk 220123 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 286-7933/61

*E-mail:* jewish\_museum@mail.ru

*Web:* www.meod.by/en/organisations/  
museum/

## **Minsk Association of former ghetto prisoners GILF**

*Chairman:* Frida Reizman

*Address:* 28, Vera Horuzhay Street,  
Minsk 220123 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 210-1178

*E-mail:* rc@meod.by

*Web:* www.meod.by

## **Minsk Hillel**

*Director:* Maxim Yudin

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Minsk 220123 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-17 334-1523

*Fax:* 375-17 210-1178  
*E-mail:* hillel@meod.by  
*Web:* www.meod.by/en/organisations/  
hillel/

### **Minsk JCC Emuna**

*Director:* Sofia Filkova  
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Minsk 220123 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 286-7961,  
286-7874  
*Fax:* 375-17 334-1547  
*E-mail:* emuna@meod.by  
*Web:* www.meod.by

### **Minsk Jewish Campus (MEOD)**

*Address:* 28, Vera Horuzhay Street,  
Minsk 220123 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 286-7874,  
286-7933,  
286-7961  
*Fax:* 375-17 334-1547  
*E-mail:* rc@meod.by  
*Web:* www.meod.by/en

### **Minsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chabad shaliach:* rabbi Schneur Deutch  
*Chairman of the Board:* Alexander  
Revzin  
*Address:* 22, Krapotkin Street, Minsk  
220002 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 334-2273,  
236-6797,  
289-5387  
*Fax:* 375-17 284-9963  
*E-mail:* ujrcrb@mail.ru  
*Web:* www.jminsk.blogspot.com

### **Minsk Jewish Day School Or Avner**

*Principal:* Eli Baitch  
*Address:* 6-8, Plekhanov Street, Minsk  
220094 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 295-3122

### **Minsk Jewish Kindergarten**

*Director:* Alla Volfson  
*Address:* 6, Belomorskaya Street, Minsk  
Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 232-1184

### **Minsk Jewish Kindergarten**

*Director:* Raisa Kazhdan  
*Address:* Minsk, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 210-1761  
*E-mail:* ll@open.by

### **Minsk Jewish School 132**

*Principal:* Alla Garus  
*Address:* 86, Peter Glebka Street, Minsk  
220104 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 255-4143,  
255-4643  
*Fax:* 375-17 255-4072  
*Web:* sch132.minsk.edu.by/main.  
aspx?uid=22760

### **Minsk Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Rachamim»**

*Chairman:* Leonid Levin  
*Director:* Sofia Abramova  
*Address:* 28, Vera Horuzhay Street,  
Minsk 220123 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 210-1178  
*E-mail:* hesed@hesed-minsk.by  
*Web:* www.meod.by/en/organisations/  
scp/

### **Minsk Reform Cogregation Sheket**

*Chairman:* Ludmila Chertova  
*Address:* Minsk, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-29 616-2928  
*E-mail:* roopi@mail.ru

### **Minsk Reform Cogregation Simcha**

*Chairman:* Efim Zhivov  
*Address:* 4-18, Kuzma Cherny Lane,  
Minsk 220000 Belarus

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*Phone:* 375-17 202-5169  
*E-mail:* roopi@mail.ru

## **Minsk Society of Jewish Culture**

*Chairman:* Elizaveta Maltseva  
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Minsk 220123 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 267-3720  
*E-mail:* rc@meod.by  
*Web:* www.meod.by

## **Minsk Youth Reform Cogregation Tamar**

*Chairman:* Natalia Elman  
*Address:* Minsk, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-29 621-9821  
*Fax:* 375-17 220-2276  
*E-mail:* elman\_nat@mail.ru

## **The AVIV Newspaper**

*Editor:* Victor Lyaskovsky  
*Address:* 28, Vera Haruzhay Street,  
Minsk 220123 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 334-1547  
*E-mail:* aviv@meod.by

## **Yeshiva Gdola deMinsk**

*Director:* Yosef-Sender Slutskin  
*Address:* Minsk, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-17 334-7048  
*E-mail:* yeshiva-minsk@tut.by

### *BREST REGION*

## **Baranovichi Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Lubov Lvova  
*Address:* 58-48, Kurov Street, Baranovi-  
chi, Brest Region 285320 Belarus  
*E-mail:* baranovichi@fjc.ru

## **Baranovichi Jewish Cultural Center Hesed Shalom**

*Director:* Sofia Bubyreva

*Address:* 56-A, Kirov Street, Baranovichi,  
Brest Region 225410 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-1634 73357,  
73389

*Fax:* 375-1634 24605  
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## **Baranovichi Reform Congregation**

*Chairperson:* Sofia Bubyreva  
*Address:* Baranovichi, Brest Region  
Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-29 168-6275

## **Brest Jewish Center «BRISK»**

*Chairman of Board:* Boris Bruk  
*Director:* Serafima Babalova  
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224030 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-162 211866  
*Fax:* 375-162 219523  
*E-mail:* hesed@brest.by

## **Brest Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Chaim Rabinowitz  
*Chairperson:* Esfir Kaplan  
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224013 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-162 426119  
*Fax:* 375-162 209523  
*E-mail:* brest@fjc.ru

## **Brest Reform Congregation Nefesh**

*Chairperson:* Regina Simonenko  
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*Phone:* 375-29 651-3859

## **Kobrin Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Eleonora Sakharuk  
*Address:* 38-4, Trudovaya Street, Kobrin,  
Brest Region 225860 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-1642 37583  
*E-mail:* kobrin@fjc.ru

**Pinsk Karlin-Stolin****Jewish Community**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Moishe Fhima

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*E-mail:* mfhima@yahoo.com

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**Pinsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Alexander Lapidus

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**Pinsk Jewish Day School****Beis Aharon**

*Principal:* Igor Karolinsky

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*Phone:* 375-165 324320

**Pinsk Jewish Welfare and Community Center Hesed Aharon**

*Chairman of Board:* Yosef Liberman

*Director:* Rosa Kasimtseva

*Address:* 27, Kulikov Street, Pinsk, Brest Region 225710 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-165 353967, 324141

*Fax:* 375-165 323027

*E-mail:* xesed\_aron@mail.ru

**Stolin Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Chernyavsky

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*Phone:* 375-1655 22046

*E-mail:* stolinaid@hotmail.com

*Web:* www.stolinmost.narod.ru

**GOMEL REGION****Gomel Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Shekhtman

*Address:* 21-A-27, Pobeda Street, Gomel 246017 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-232 966102

**Gomel Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Batya»**

*Chairman of Board:* V. Gershanyuk

*Director:* Elena Kratser

*Address:* 1-A, Krasnoarmeyskaya Street, Gomel 246050 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-232 441023,  
744405

*E-mail:* welfare\_hesed@gomel.by

**Gomel Reform Congregation Kadima**

*Chairman:* Leonid Kazimirsky

*Address:* Gomel, Belarus

*Phone:* 375-232 542547

**Gomel Regional Jewish Community Ahdut (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Gershanok

*Address:* 1-A, Krasnoarmeyskaya Street, Gomel 146050 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-232 744405

**Kalinkovichi Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Yakov Erenburg

*Address:* 8-31, Komsomolskaya Street, Kalinkovichi, Gomel Region 247710 Belarus

*E-mail:* kalinkovichi@fjc.ru

**Mozyr Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Grigory Shkolnikov

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*Phone:* 375-2351 22119,  
26427

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*Fax:* 375-2351 32625  
*E-mail:* mozyr@fjc.ru

## **Mozyr Jewish Welfare Center Hesed Emmanuel**

*Director:* Bella Zhuravskaya  
*Address:* 3, Yakub Kolas Street, Mozyr, Gomel Region 247760 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-2351 43082  
*Fax:* 375-2351 18504  
*E-mail:* hesed.mozyr@tut.by

## **Rechitsa Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Yakov Plekhov  
*Address:* 110, Lenin Street, Rechitza, Gomel Region 247500 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-2340 35555

## **Rechitsa Jewish Welfare and Community Center Hesed Ami**

*Chairman of Board:* Yakov Plekhov  
*Director:* Nina Mikhalevskaya  
*Address:* 32, Lunacharsky Street, Rechitsa, Gomel Region, 247500 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-2340 64321  
*Fax:* 375-2340 60498  
*E-mail:* welfare-rechitsa@yandex.ru

## **Svetlogorsk Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Rachamim»**

*Director:* Yakov Sheraizin  
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### **GRODNO REGION**

## **Grodno Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Boris Kvyatkovsky  
*Rabbi:* Rabbi Yitzchak Kofman  
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375-29 644-3690

*E-mail:* grodna@gmail.com  
*Web:* www.jewishgrodno.com

## **Grodno Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Nohum»**

*Chairman of Board:* Mikhail Korzh  
*Director:* Elena Kutsevich  
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*Phone:* 375-152 740843  
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## **Grodno Reform Congregation «Menorah»**

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## **Lida Jewish Cultural Association**

*Chairman of Board:* Passionaria (Asya) Saulkina  
*Director:* Elena Minina  
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*Phone:* 375-1561 67657  
*Fax:* 375-156 468757,  
468662  
*E-mail:* lidad\_99@yahoo.com  
*Web:* www.lidajews.narod.ru

## **Lida Reform Congregation**

*Chairman:* Mihail Dvilyansky  
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*Phone:* 375-29 785-2390

### **MAHILEV REGION**

## **Bobruisk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Boruch Lamdan  
*Chairman:* I. Chernin  
*Address:* 83, Lieutenant Schmidt Street,

Bobruisk, Mahilev Region 213802  
Belarus  
Phone: 375-225 173813  
E-mail: bobruisk@fjc.ru

**Bobruisk Jewish Day School Beit Menachem**

*Principal:* Galina Dubasova  
*Address:* 36, Sotsialisticheskaya Street,  
Bobruisk, Mahilev Region 213800  
Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-225 179171

**Bobruisk Jewish Welfare Center  
«Rachamim»**

*Chairman of Board:* Leonid Rubinshtein  
*Director:* Galina Dubinskaya  
*Address:* 166-A, Pushkin Street, Bob-  
ruisk, Mahilev Region 213800 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-225 524605,  
520933,  
521171,  
520902

*Fax:* 375-225 574843  
*E-mail:* hesed-bobruisk@mail.ru

**Bobruisk Municipal Jewish  
Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Leonid Rubinshtein  
*Address:* 166-A, Pushkin Street, Ba-  
bruisk, Mahilev Region 213800 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-225 521171, 520902  
*Fax:* 375-225 574843

**Bobruisk Reform Congregation**

*Chairperson:* Faina Zaharova  
*Address:* Babruisk, Mahilev Region  
Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-225 520933

**Gorki Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Livshitz  
*Address:* Gorki, Mahilev Region Belarus

*Phone:* 375-2233 23487  
*Fax:* 375-2233 50815  
*E-mail:* gorki@fjc.ru

**Jewish Community of Mogilev  
(Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Menachem Alperowitz  
*Chairman:* Boris Goldinberg  
*Address:* 38/121, Kobrinskaya Street,  
Mahilev 212030 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-222 399212  
*Fax:* 375-222 264315

**Mahilev Municipal Jewish Community  
(Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Shelektor  
*Address:* 26, Tulskey Lane, Mahilev  
212017 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-22 691-9179

**Mogilev Jewish Welfare Center  
«Hesed Baruch»**

*Chairman of Board:* Vladimir Shelektor  
*Director:* Inna Lvovich  
*Address:* 26, Tulskey Lane, Mahilev  
212017 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-222 236546,  
468202

*E-mail:* hesed-mogilev@mail.ru

**Mogilev Reform Congregation  
«Keshet»**

*Chairman:* Ludmila Izakson-Bolotovs-  
kaya  
*Address:* Mahilev, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-222 220568

**Osipovichi Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Sarah Utevskeya  
*Address:* 43-2, Chumakov Street, Osipov-  
ichi, Mahilev Region 213760 Belarus  
*E-mail:* osipovichi@fjc.ru

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## MINSK REGION

### **Borisov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Boris Gitlin  
*Address:* 1-37, Stekolnaya Street, Barisav,  
Minsk Region 222120 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-29 774-9947

### **Borisov Jewish Welfare Center**

«**Hesed Light of Menorah**»  
*Chairman of Board:* Mikhail Peretz  
*Director:* Natalia Lisovskaya  
*Address:* 63, Chernyakhovsky Street,  
Barisav, Minsk Region 222120 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-1777 62840  
*Fax:* 375-1777 36288  
*E-mail:* hesedborisov@mail.ru

### **Slutsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Raisa Tychina  
*Address:* 11-27, Parizhskaya Kommuna  
Street, Slutsk, Minsk region 223610  
Belarus

### **Slutsk Jewish Welfare Center**

*Chairman of Board:* Raisa Tychina  
*Director:* A. Kipnis  
*Address:* 207, Lenin Street, Slutsk, Minsk  
Region 220301 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-1795 22956  
*Fax:* 375-1795 20433

### **Slutsk Reform Congregation**

*Chairperson:* Asya Kipnis  
*Address:* Slutsk, Minsk Region, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-179 522956

## VITEBSK REGION

### **Orsha Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Sharon Hershko  
*Rabbi:* rabbi Aharon Hershko  
*Chairman:* Isaak Gurevich  
*Address:* 20-20, Tekstilshchikov Ave, Or-  
sha, Vitebsk Region 210030 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-2161 20472,  
30486,  
34488

*Fax:* 375-2161 27275  
*E-mail:* orsha@fjc.ru

### **Orsha Jewish Welfare Center** «**Hesed Shalom**»

*Director:* Igor Gurevich  
*Address:* 18, Voskresenskaya Street, Or-  
sha, Vitebsk Region 211030 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-2161 20472,  
375-2162 18672  
*Fax:* 375-2161 27275  
*E-mail:* hesedorsha@vitebsk.by

### **Orsha Municipal Jewish Community** (Orthodox)

*Chairman:* Igor Gurevich  
*Address:* 18, Voskresenskaya Street,  
Orsha, Vitebsk Region 211030 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-2162 18672  
*Fax:* 375-2162 18504  
*E-mail:* hesedorsha@vitebsk.by

### **Orsha Reform Congregation**

*Chairperson:* Lev Rahlin  
*Address:* Orsha, Vitebsk Region, Belarus

### **Polotsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Kalman Glikman  
*Address:* 9-15, Gogol Street, Polotsk,  
Vitebsk Region Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-2144 62891, 45602  
*Fax:* 375-2144 43027  
*E-mail:* polotzk@fjc.ru

### **Polotsk Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed** **Ephraim»**

*Chairman of Board:* Alexander Yofek  
*Director:* Ella Meltser  
*Address:* 18, Karl Marx Street, Polotsk,  
Vitebsk Region 211400 Belarus

*Phone:* 375-2144 43027  
*E-mail:* hasad@vitebsk.by

**Polotsk Municipal Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Alexander Yofek  
*Address:* 18, Karl Marx Street, Polotsk, Vitebsk Region 211400 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-2144 60861  
*Fax:* 375-2144 24321  
*E-mail:* polcentr@rambler.ru

**Polotsk Reform Congregation**

*Chairperson:* Halina Rubinchik  
*Address:* Polotsk, Vitebsk Region, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-214 460861

**«The MISHPOHA», International Jewish Magazine**

*Editor:* Arkady Shulman  
*Address:* P.O. Box 22, Vitebsk 210001 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-21 2211997  
*E-mail:* mishpoha@aport.ru  
*Web:* www.mishpoha.org

**Vitebsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* rabbi Shaul Vishedski  
*Address:* Vitebsk, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-29 691-1770  
*E-mail:* vitebsk@fjc.ru

**Vitebsk Jewish Welfare Center «Hasdei David»**

*Chairman of Board:* Mark Pipkin  
*Director:* Victoria Andreyeva  
*Address:* 6, 1st Kolkhoznaya Street, Vitebsk 210016 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-212 366347, 369416  
*Fax:* 375-212 233423  
*E-mail:* hasdei2@tut.by  
*Web:* www.veod.by.ru

**Vitebsk Municipal Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Mark Pipkin  
*Address:* 6, 1st Kolkhoznaya Street, Vitebsk 210026 Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-212 366347

**Vitebsk Reform Congregation «Emuna»**

*Chairman:* Alexander Frumin  
*Address:* Vitebsk, Belarus  
*Phone:* 375-29 513- 9383

**BULGARIA**

**Organisation of the Jews in Bulgaria «Shalom»**

*Address:* Boulevard Al Stambolijski, No. 50, Sofia 1303 Bulgaria  
*Phone:* +359 (2) 943-3310, +359 (2) 926-5301  
*Web:* www.shalom.bg

**Jewish Community Center**

*Address:* Tsar Kalojan St. 15, Plovdiv, Bulgaria (In the courtyard of a large apartment complex)

**Jewish Community Center**

*Address:* Ivan Vazov Sq. 4, Russe, Bulgaria  
*Phone:* +359 (82) 27-0540

**Chabad Jewish Center Sofia Bulgaria**

*Address:* Stara Planina St. 38, Sofia, 1504 Bulgaria  
*Phone:* +359 (2) 944-3380, +359 (2) 944-3380

**Jewish Museum**

*Address:* 16, Joseph Ekzarh St., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria  
*Phone:* +359 (2) 83-1273, +359 (2) 83-5085

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Synagogue**

*Address:* Ivan Vazov Sq. 4, Russe,  
Bulgaria

*Phone:* +359 (82) 27-0540

## **Chabad Bulgaria**

*Address:* Bul. «Vitosha» 49, fl. 1, 1000  
Sofia, Bulgaria

*Phone:* +359 (2) 987-0861,  
+359 (2) 981-3550

*E-mail:* office@chabad-bulgaria.org,  
rabbi@chabad-bulgaria.org

*Web:* www.chabad-bulgaria.org

## **Sofia Central Synagogue**

*Address:* 16, Joseph Ekzarh St., 1000  
Sofia, Bulgaria

*Phone:* +359 (2) 83-1273,  
+359 (2) 83-5085

## **Israeli Embassy in Bulgaria**

*Address:* Embassy 1 Bulgaria Sq., N D  
K Administration Building - 7th Floor,  
Sofia, Bulgaria

*Phone:* +359 (2) 951-5044,  
+359 (2) 952-1101

*E-mail:* info@sofia.mfa.gov.il

## **The Jewish Agency for Israel**

*Address:* 50 Stambulski Bulvar Sofia,  
Bulgaria 1303

*Phone:* +359 (2) 980-0893,  
+359 (2) 980-0894

## **CHINA and HONG KONG**

### *COMMUNITY STRUCTURES*

## **Chabad Center Beijing**

*Address:* Kings Garden Villa 18 Xiao Yun  
Road House D5A, Chao Yang District  
100016 Beijing, China

*Phone:* +86 (10) 6468-1321,  
+86 (10) 6468-1321

*E-mail:* chabadbeijing@hotmail.com

*Web:* www.chabadbeijing.com

## **Chabad House in Guangzhou**

*Address:* Jedeiete Residence 3/F, Flat  
02, 861 Jiefang Bei Road, Guangzhou,  
China

*Phone:* +86 (20) 8326-5357

*E-mail:* shaye\_z@hotmail.com

## **B'Nai Yisrael**

*Address:* 19th Floor 1277 Beijing Road,  
Shanghai, China 20004

*Phone:* +86 (21) 6289-9903,  
+86 (21) 6289-9957

*E-mail:* sjcchina@usa.net,  
kaptzan@prodigychna.com

## **Chabad Center Shanghai**

*Address:* Shanghai Jewish Center,  
Shang-Mira Garden Villa #2 1720  
Hong Qiao Road, Shanghai, 200336  
China

*Phone:* +86 (21) 6278-0225,  
+86 (21) 6278-0223

*E-mail:* info@chinajewish.org

*Web:* www.chinajewish.org

## **Chabad Center Hong Kong**

*Address:* 3rd Floor, Coda Plaza 51  
Garden Road, Mid-Levels

*Phone:* +852 2523-9770,  
+852 2845-2772

*E-mail:* info@chabadhk.org

*Web:* www.chabadasia.com/pages/  
hongkong/hk\_chabadc.html

## **Jewish Community Center**

*Address:* One Robinson Place, 70  
Robinson Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong

*Phone:* +852 2801-5440,  
+852 2877-0917

*Web:* www.jcc.org.hk

**Ohel Leah Synagogue Charity**

Address: Ohel Leah Synagogue, 70  
Robinson Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong

Phone: +852 2589-2621,  
+852 2548-4200

E-mail: mail@ohelleah.org

Web: www.ohelleah.org

**Shuva Israel Community Center**

Address: 1B, 16-18 Macdonnell Road,  
Mid-Levels, Hong Kong

Phone: +852 2851-6300,  
+852 2851-7482

**Kehilat Zion**

Address: 1/F., Unit 102, Wing On Plaza  
62 Mody Road, Tsimshatsui-Kowloon-  
Hong Kong

Phone: +852 2366-6364,  
+852 3267-0139

E-mail: rabbi@kehillat-zion.co

Web: www.kehillat-zion.com

**Tour of Jewish Shanghai**

Phone: +86 (130) 0214-6702 (mobile)

Web: www.shanghai-jews.com

**Cemetery Hong Kong**

Address: 13 Shan Kwong Road, Happy  
Valley, Hong Kong

Web: www.chabadasia.com

**Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival**

Address: Suite 804, Winning House 10-  
16 Cochrane Street Central, Hong Kong

Phone: +852 2554-7070,  
+852 2868-4227

E-mail: info@hkjewishfilmfest.org

Web: www.hkjewishfilmfest.org

*RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS***Kehillat Beijing**

Address: Capital Mansion, 6 Xinyuan  
Nanlu, Chaoyang District, Beijing

E-mail: info@sinogogue.org

Web: www.sinogogue.org

**Beth Aharon Synagogue**

Address: 50 Museum Road, Shanghai,  
China

**Ohel Moishe Synagogue**

Address: 486 Seymour Road, Shanghai,  
China

**Ohel Leah Congregation**

Address: Ohel Leah Synagogue,  
70 Robinson Road, Mid-Levels,  
Hong Kong

Phone: +852 2589-2621,  
+852 2548-4200

E-mail: rabbi@ohelleah.org

Web: www.ohelleah.org

**Ohel Leah Synagogue**

Address: 70 Robinson Road, Mid-Levels,  
Hong Kong

Phone: +852 2589-2621,  
+852 2548-4200

E-mail: mail@ohelleah.org

Web: www.ohelleah.org

**Shuva Israel Synagogue**

Address: 1B, 16-18 Macdonnell Road,  
Mid-Levels, Hong Kong

Phone: +852 2851-6300,  
+852 2851-7482

**The Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong**

Address: One Robinson Place, 70  
Robinson Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong  
(UJC Level 5 of the JCC)

Phone: +852 2801-5440,  
+852 2877-0917

E-mail: michael@ujc.org.hk

Web: www.ujc.org.hk

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Synagogue Hechal Ezra**

*Address:* 1/F., Unit 102, Wing On Plaza  
62 Mody Road, Tsimshatsui - Kowloon -  
Hong Kong  
*Phone:* +852 2368-0061  
*E-mail:* rabbi@kehilat-zion.com

+852 2845-2772

*E-mail:* info@chabadhk.org  
*Web:* www.chabadasia.com

## *EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*

### **Ganeinu**

*Address:* Pinnacle Campus, Tianzhu  
Real Estate Development Zone,  
Shunyi Dist  
*E-mail:* ganeinu@chabadbeijing.com

### **China Judaic Studies Association**

*President:* Xu Xin  
*Address:* Nanjing University, Nanjing  
210093  
*E-mail:* xuxin49@jlonline.com  
*Web:* servercc.oakton.edu/~friend/  
chinajews.html

### **Carmel School of Hong Kong**

*Address:* Carmel School of Hong Kong,  
10 Borrett Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong  
*Phone:* +852 2964-1600,  
+852 2813-4121  
*E-mail:* admin@carmel.edu.hk  
*Web:* www.carmel.edu.hk

### **Ohel Leah Synagogue Adult Education**

*Address:* Ohel Leah Synagogue, 70  
Robinson Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong  
*Phone:* +852 2589-2621,  
+852 2548-4200  
*E-mail:* mail@ohelleah.org  
*Web:* www.ohelleah.org

### **Shul-Chabad House in Coda Plaza**

*Address:* Chabad House 3/F, Coda Plaza,  
51 Garden Road, Midlevels, Hong Kong  
*Phone:* +852 2523-9770,

### **Shul-Mandarin Hotel**

*Address:* 5 Connaught Road, Central,  
Hong Kong  
*E-mail:* info@chabadhk.org  
*Web:* www.chabadasia.com

## *MASS MEDIA*

### **Hong Kong Jewish Guide**

*Phone:* +852 2313-8388  
*E-mail:* chouraqui@darton.com  
*Web:* www.hongkongjewishguide.com

## *OFFICIAL STRUCTURES OF ISRAEL*

### **Embassy of Israel**

*Address:* Embassy No. 17 Tian Ze  
Luchaoyang District Beijing 100600  
*Phone:* +86 (10) 6532-7788,  
+86 (10) 6532-7781  
*E-mail:* info@beijing.mfa.gov.il

### **Consulate General**

*Address:* Consulate General Tower, 2701  
Admiralty Center, Hong-Kong  
*Phone:* +852 2821-7500,  
+852 2865-0220  
*E-mail:* info@hongkong.mfa.gov.il

## **GEORGIA**

### **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Representative office in Georgia and Armenia**

*Representative:* Irina Lipski  
*Office director:* Sergey Vlasov  
*Address:* 4, Machabeli Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 995992  
*E-mail:* gentbilisi@jdc.org.ge  
*Web:* www.jdc.org.il/fsu/georgia

**Embassy of the State of Israel in Georgia**

*Ambassador:* Itzhak Gerberg  
*Address:* 61, D. Agmashenebeli Ave.,  
Tbilisi 0102 Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 942705,  
951709,  
964457

*Fax:* 995-32 955209  
*E-mail:* info@tbilisi.mfa.gov.il  
*Web:* tbilisi.mfa.gov.il

**Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI),  
Representative office in Georgia**

*Head of delegation:* Gregory Brodsky  
*Address:* 2, Besiki Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia  
*E-mail:* gregoryb@jafi.org

**Jewish Community of Georgia  
(Orthodox)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Ariel Levin  
*Acting Chief Rabbi of Georgia:* rabbi  
Avimelech Rozenblat  
*Address:* 12, Tumanian Street, Tbilisi  
0105 Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 933413,  
983821  
*E-mail:* ariel@caucasus.net  
*Web:* www.tiferet-zvi.ge

**Jewish Culture and Education Fund,  
Tbilisi**

*Director:* Elena Berkovich  
*Address:* 30, Vakhtang VI Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 770653  
*E-mail:* jcc.tbilisi@access.sanet.ge

**Tbilisi Ashkenazic Synagogue**

*Address:* 28, Leselidze Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 985923

**Tbilisi Congregation  
of Georgian Jews**

*Address:* 45, Leselidze Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 988934

**Tbilisi Hillel**

*Director:* Moris Krikheli  
*Address:* 30, Vakhtang VI Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 771706  
*E-mail:* gbtmoris@gmail.com

**Tbilisi Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Avraham Michaelashvili  
*Address:* 10/2, Shevchenko Street, Tbilisi  
0108 Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 933999,  
922573,  
983821  
*Fax:* 995-32 999040  
*E-mail:* chabadgeorgia@gmail.com

**Tbilisi Jewish Day School Or Avner**

*Address:* 73, Gotgasali Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 750776  
*E-mail:* mkozo@oravner.ru

**Tbilisi Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed  
Eliahu»**

*Chairman:* Shota Migrelishvili  
*Director:* Revaz Shatashvili  
*Address:* 30, Vakhtang VI Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia  
*Phone:* 995-32 772012,  
772013,  
770789  
*E-mail:* hesed@access.sanet.ge

**World Congress of Georgian Jews,  
Representative office in Georgia**

*Director:* Guram Batiashvili

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*Address:* 11-A, Leselidze Street, Tbilisi,  
Georgia

*Phone:* 995-32 999096,  
772057

*Fax:* 995-32 327525

*E-mail:* guram\_hat@hotmail.com

*Web:* www.georgianjews.org

## GEORGIAN REGIONS

### **Akhaltsikhe Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Simon Leviashvili

*Address:* 109, Guramishvili Street,  
Akhaltsikhe, Georgia

### **Batumi Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Yakov Akayev

*Address:* 9th Marta Street, Batumi,  
Ajaria, Georgia

### **Batumi Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Tzvi»**

*Director:* Emil Krupnik

*Address:* Batumi, Ajaria, Georgia

*Phone:* 995-222 75865

*E-mail:* hesedcvi@yahoo.com

### **Gori Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Tamaz Magalashvili

*Address:* 11, Kasteli Street, Gori, Georgia

*Phone:* 995-370 73397

*E-mail:* naira-61@rambler.ru

### **Gori Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Shalom»**

*Chairman:* Vissarion Manasherov

*Director:* Tamazi Magalashvili

*Address:* 11, Kasteli Street, Gori, Georgia

*Phone:* 995-370 73397

*E-mail:* naira-61@rambler.ru

### **Kareli Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Shalva Tsitsuasvili

*Address:* Kareli, Georgia

### **Kutaisi Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Ilya Chachiashvili

*Address:* 2, Gaponov Street, Kutaisi,  
Georgia

### **Kutaisi Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Abuli»**

*Chairman:* Shota Migrelishvili

*Director:* Georgy Chikvashvili

*Address:* Kutaisi, Georgia

*Phone:* 995-331 43690

*E-mail:* giga75@mail.ru

### **Oni Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Khananashvili

*Address:* 85, Vakhtang VI Street, Oni,  
Georgia

*Phone:* 995-995 34977

### **Oni Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Moshe»**

*Director:* Mikhail Khananashvili

*Address:* 85, Vakhtang IV Street, Oni,  
Georgia

*Phone:* 995-995 34977

### **Rustavi Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Aviv»**

*Chairman:* Leonid Varenkov

*Director:* Tamara Uroeva

*Address:* Rustavi, Georgia

*Phone:* 995-34 155253

*E-mail:* tamarhesed@mail.ru

### **Surami Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Aleko Djanashvili

*Address:* Surami, Georgia

## ABKHAZIA

### **Jewish Community of Abkhazia**

*Chairman:* Alexander Glusker

*Hesed director:* Raisa

*Address:* Sukhumi, Abkhazia, Georgia

*E-mail:* raya-sukhum@mail.ru

*Web:* www.apsny.ru/ethnic/ethnic.php?  
page=content/hebrew/hebrew.htm

## INDIA

### COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

#### **Reubs Education Trust**

*E-mail:* magenabraham@icenet.net

#### **Shalom Education Trust**

*E-mail:* magenabraham@icenet.net

*Web:* www.magenabraham.20m.com/  
schools.htm

#### **Shelanu Jewish Circle**

*Address:* C/o Magen Abraham

Synagogue Bukhara Mohalla,  
Opp. Parsi Agiyari Khamasa Gate,  
Ahmedabad: 380 001

*Phone:* +91(79) 533-0981,  
+91(79) 630-2605

*E-mail:* magenabraham@icenet.net

*Web:* www.magenabraham.20m.com/  
shelanu.htm

#### **Council of Indian Jewry**

*Address:* 96 Penso Villa, Shivaji Park,  
Mumbai 400028

*Phone:* +91 (22) 270-461,  
+91 (22) 271-628

#### **Evelyn Peters Jewish Community Center**

*Address:* Evelyn Peters JCC-AJDC Unit 6,  
7, 8 Kakad Udyog Bahavan co op society

S.Keer Marg, Off L.J. Road, Mahim,  
Mumbai 400 016

*Phone:* +91 (22) 431 4734,

+91 (22) 431 1734,

+91 (22) 421 0835

*Web:* jewcenter@hotmail.com

#### **Hadassah Mumbai**

*Address:* c/o AJDC, 3 Rodef Shalom, 23  
Dadoji Kindev Road

*E-mail:* ajdc.jew.ngo@access.net.in

#### **Jewish Welfare Society**

*Address:* 2 Humayan Road, New Delhi  
110003

### RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

#### **Magen Abraham**

##### **Synagogue**

*Address:* Bukhara Mohalla, Opp. Parsi  
Agiyari Khamasa Gate, Ahmedabad:  
380 001

*Phone:* +91(79) 533-0981,  
+91(79) 630-2605

*E-mail:* magenabraham@icenet.net

*Web:* www.magenabraham.20m.com

#### **Beth El Synagogue**

*Address:* 26/1 Pollock Street, Calcutta

#### **Cochin Synagogue**

*Address:* Synagogue Lane, Cochin

#### **Beth-El Synagogue**

*Address:* 909 Mahatma Gandhi Road,  
Panvel, Maharashtra

*Phone:* +91 (22) 745-1014

#### **Ohel David Synagogue**

*Address:* 9, Dr. Ambedkar Road Pune,  
Maharashtra: 411 001

*Phone:* +91 (20) 613-2048

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Succhoth Shelomo Synagogue**

*Address:* 93 Rasta Peth, Pune 411001  
Marharashtra

*Phone:* +91 (22) 267-0404,  
+91 (22) 267-3872,  
+91 (22) 267-2525

*E-mail:* sarith007@hotmail.com,  
baikagir@bom7.vsnl.net.in

## **Etz Chaim Prayer Hall**

*Address:* 19, Umarkhadi, 2nd Cross Lane,  
Mumbai 400 009

## **Tiphereth Israel Synagogue**

*Address:* 92 Clerk Road, Jacob hara  
Moholl, Mumbai

*Phone:* +91 (22) 533-2952

## **Keneseth Elijahoo Synagogue**

*Address:* 43 Dr. V.B. Gandhi Marg, Fort,  
Mumbai

## **Judah Hyan Hall Synagogue**

*Address:* 2 Humayun Road, New Delhi  
110003

*Phone:* +91 (11) 463-5500

## **Kurla Bene-Israel Prayer Hall**

*Address:* 275 C.S.T. Road, Jewish Colony,  
Kurla (W), Mumbai  
*Phone:* +91 (22) 511-2132

## **Shaar Hashamain' (Gate of Heaven) Synagogue**

*Address:* JansetJi Maneckji Road,  
Tembhi, Thane 01581

*Phone:* +91 (22) 534-7334

## **Magen David Synagogue**

*Address:* 340 Sir J.J. Road, Byculla,  
Mumbai

### *EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*

## **Reubs High School**

*E-mail:* magenabraham@icenet.net  
*Web:* www.magenabraham.20m.com/  
schools.htm

## **Magen Hassidim Synagogue**

*Address:* 8 Mohamed Shahid Marg.,  
Agripada

## **Reubs Higher Secondary School**

*Address:* Punit Marg, Maninagar,  
Ahmedabad: 380008  
*E-mail:* magenabraham@icenet.net  
*Web:* www.magenabraham.20m.com/  
schools.htm

## **Rodef Shalom**

*Address:* 23 Dadoji Konddev Marg  
Byculla, Mumbai  
*Phone:* +91 (22) 373-0745,  
+91 (22) 373-0745  
*E-mail:* ajdc.jew.ngo@access.net.in

## **Reubs Primary School**

*E-mail:* magenabraham@icenet.net  
*Web:* www.magenabraham.20m.com/  
schools.htm

## **Shaare Rason Synagogue**

*Address:* Situated at 90, Tantanpura  
Street, Mumbai: 400 003

## **The 'Shaar Harahamim' (Gate of Mercy) Synagogue**

*Address:* 254, Samuel Street, Mandvi,  
Mumbai

## **Elisha Ezra Ezekiel Sassoon High School**

*Address:* Elisha Ezra Ezekiel Sassoon

High School - Byculla, Mumbai 400008

### **Hill Grange High School**

*Address:* Hill Grange High School - 13 A-Peddar Road, Mumbai 400026

### **ORT India**

*Address:* 68 Worli Hill Estate, P.O. Box 6571, Mumbai, India 40001868 Worli Hill Estate

*Phone:* +91 (22) 496-2350,  
+91 (22) 496-8423,  
+91 (22) 364-7308

*E-mail:* jhirad@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in

### **Sir Jacob Sassoon High School**

*Address:* Sir Jacob Sassoon High School - Byculla, Mumbai 400008

*Phone:* +91 (22) 307-7158

#### *OFFICIAL STRUCTURES OF ISRAEL*

### **Embassy of Israel**

*Address:* Embassy 3 Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi – 110011

*Phone:* +91 (11) 301-3238,  
+91 (11) 301-3238

*E-mail:* info@newdelhi.mfa.gov.il

*Web:* <http://bombay.mfa.gov.il>

### **The Jewish Agency**

*Address:* 137 Mahatma Gandhi Rd. P.O. Box 1979, Mumbai 400023 India

*Phone:* +91 (22) 228-1993,  
+91 (22) 228-1994,  
+91 (22) 228-2467

## **INDONESIA**

#### *RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS*

### **Surabaya Synagogue**

*Address:* 4-6 Djalan Kajoon Sourbay 60271

*Phone:* +62 (31) 545-2815

## **KAZAKHSTAN**

### **Association of Jewish Communities of Kazakhstan (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Menachem-Mendel Gershovich

*Rabbi:* rabbi Meir Schainer

*Address:* 165-A, Klochkov Street, Almaty 050057 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-727 274-9331

*Fax:* 7-727 274-6703

*E-mail:* jewishkz@gmail.com

*Web:* [www.jew.kz](http://www.jew.kz)

### **Chabad Center of Kazakhstan «Beis Menachem»**

*Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan:* rabbi Yeshaya E. Cohen

*Address:* 206-E, Rayimbek Ave., Almaty 050034 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-727 253-0101,  
253-9358

*Fax:* 7-727 250-7770

*E-mail:* center@chabad.kz

*Web:* [www.chabad.kz](http://www.chabad.kz)

### **Embassy of the State of Israel in Republic of Kazakhstan**

*Ambassador:* Israel Mei-Ami

*Address:* 8, Auezov Street, Astana 010000 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7172 688738,  
688739

*Fax:* 7-7172 688735

*E-mail:* [ambass-sec@almaty.mfa.gov.il](mailto:ambass-sec@almaty.mfa.gov.il)

*Web:* [almaty.mfa.gov.il](http://almaty.mfa.gov.il)

### **Jewish Congress of Kazakhstan (JCK)**

*President:* Alexander Mashkevich

*Executive Director:* Fedor Osinin

*Address:* 56, Kunayev Street, Almaty 050002 Kazakhstan

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

Phone: 7-727 250-8757,  
250-8627,  
250-8762,  
250-8600,  
250-8620

Fax: 7-727 250-8630

E-mail: jck@epa.kz

Web: www.eajc.org

## **The Mitsva Association of Jewish National Organisations of Republic of Kazakhstan**

*President:* Alexander Baron

*Address:* 88-35, Makatayev Street,  
Almaty 050004 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-727 273-5449,  
258-3459

*Fax:* 7-727 273-0411

*E-mail:* contact@mitsva.kz

*Web:* www.mitsva.kz

### *ASTANA*

## **Astana Jewish Cultural Center «Aleph»**

*Address:* 22-6, Bukeykhanov Street,  
Astana, Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7172 324474,  
541331

## **Astana Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Astana»**

*Chairman of the Board:* Felix Vitebsky

*Hesed Director:* Elena Levina

*JCC Director:* Dina Itkina

*Address:* 7-3, Karl Liebknecht Street,  
Astana 010033 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7172 383248

*Fax:* 7-7172 754502

*E-mail:* hesedastana@mail.ru

## **The Jewish Center of Astana - Chabad Lubavitch, «Beis Rachel»**

*Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan:* rabbi Yeshaya E. Cohen

*Chief Rabbi of Astana:* rabbi Yom-Tov Yehuda Kubalkin

*Chairman:* Lazar Shafer

*Address:* 8 Pushkin Street, P.O. Box 1492,  
Astana 010008 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7172 376770

*Fax:* 7-7172 376772

*Web:* www.chabad.kz

### *AKMOLA REGION*

## **Borovoye Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Marina Azarova

*Address:* 15-32, Lenin Street, Borovoye  
021708 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-71630 71183

*E-mail:* borovoye@fjc.ru

## **Kokchetav Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Zaituna Egorova

*Address:* 5-44, Sunkar, Kokshetav  
020000 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7162 268103

*E-mail:* kokchetav@fjc.ru

## **Kokchetav Jewish Cultural Center «Hatikva»**

*Chairman:* Vitaly Dubrovin

*Address:* Kokshetav Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7162 761281

## **Kokchetav Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Nathan»**

*Chairman of the Board:* Victor Shnyade

*Hesed Director:* Anatoly Itkin

*JCC Director:* Natalia Chembirovich

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Kokshetav 020000 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7162 261281

*E-mail:* natan\_hesed@mail.ru,  
hesed\_natan@kokc.kz

**Schuchinsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Oleg Perepletkhov

*Address:* Schuchinsk 021704

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*Phone:* 7-71636 41483

*E-mail:* schuchinsk@fjc.ru

**Stepnogorsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Yulia Pokusayeva

*Address:* 23-87, 3rd m/r-n, Stepnogorsk  
021500 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-71645 28533

*E-mail:* stepnogorsk@fjc.ru

*AKTOBE REGION*

**Aktyubinsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mark Yoffe

*Address:* 4-4, Machambet Street, Aktobe  
030007 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7132 560094,  
505015

*Fax:* 7-7132 564539

*E-mail:* aktubinsk@fjc.ru

**Aktyubinsk Jewish Cultural Center  
«Shalom Acting»**

*Chairman:* Semyon Reznik

*Address:* 4-4, Makhambetov Street,  
Aktobe 033007 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7132 543311

**Aktyubinsk Jewish Welfare  
and Community Center  
«Hesed Sarah»**

*Director:* Elena Untenko

*Address:* 2-1-13, Moldogulova Ave.,  
Aktobe 030019 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7132 545450

*E-mail:* dekabrina\_kz@mail.ru

*ALMATY REGION*

**Taldykorgan Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Alexander Plotkin

*Address:* 31, Amanzholov Street,  
Taldykorgan 040000 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-72822

*E-mail:* taldy-kurgan@fjc.ru

**Taldykorgan Jewish Cultural and  
Welfare Center**

*Chairperson:* Diana Matushkina

*Address:* Taldykorgan 040000  
Kazakhstan

*ALMATY CITY*

**Almaty Jewish Community Center  
«Rimon»**

*Director:* Inessa Chugaynova

*Address:* 88-35, Makatayev Street,  
Almaty 050004 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7272 735449,  
735447

*Fax:* 7-7272 730411

*E-mail:* jcc\_almaty@mitsva.kz

**Almaty Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Alexander Arepiev

*Address:* 88-35, Makatayev Street,  
Almaty 050004 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-727 273-5449

*Fax:* 7-727 273-0411

**Almaty Jewish Day School**

**«Gershuni»**

*Principal:* Anna Schepkina

*Rabbi:* rabbi Shevah Zlatopolsky

*Address:* 28, Klochkov Street, Almaty  
Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-727 277-5977

*Fax:* 7-727 277-5921

*E-mail:* zlatopolsky\_s@hotmail.com

*Web:* www.oravner.com/gershuni

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Almaty Jewish Welfare Center**

«Hesed Paulina»

*Director:* Sima Branovich

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Almaty 050004 Kazakhstan

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*Fax:* 7-727 273-0411

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## **«Shalom», Newspaper of Kazakhstan**

*Editor-in-Chief:* Adolf Artsishevsky

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050034 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-727 253-0101

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*E-mail:* shalom@jewish.kz

*Web:* www.chabad.kz

## **«The Davar», Newspaper**

*Editor:* Isaak Dvorkin

*Address:* 88-35, Makatayev Street,

Almaty 050004 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-727 273-5449,

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*Fax:* 7-727 258-3459

*E-mail:* davar@mitsva.kz

*Web:* www.mitsva.kz/davar.shtml

## **The Jewish Center of Kazakhstan - Chabad Lubavitch, «Beis Menachem» – Almaty**

*Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan:* rabbi Yeshaya Cohen

*Chief Rabbi of Almaty:* rabbi Elchanan Cohen

*Address:* 206-E Rayimbek Ave., Almaty 050034 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-727 253-9358

*Fax:* 7-727 250-7770

*E-mail:* center@chabad.kz

*Web:* www.chabad.kz

## *ATYRAU REGION*

### **Atyrau Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Lubov Orymbayeva

*Address:* 52-B-22, Auezov Street, Atyrau

060020 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7122 258566,

223138

### **Atyrau Jewish Cultural Center**

«Aliyah»

*Chairman:* Alexander Kozachkov

*Address:* Atyrau 060000 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7122 323861

## *EAST-KAZAKHSTAN REGION*

### **Ust-Kamenogorsk Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Alexander Varshavsky

*Address:* 59, Ushanov Street, Oskemen

072000 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7232 271272

*E-mail:* ctp@sigma\_east.com

### **Ust-Kamenogorsk Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Faina»**

*Chairman of the Board:* Alexander Varshavsky

*Hesed Director:* Vladimir Lebedev

*JCC Director:* Lubov Rylskaya

*Address:* 44-1, Ordzhonikidze Street,

Oskemen 070010 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7232 262514

*E-mail:* faina@ukg.kz

### **Semipalatinsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Leonid Reznikov

*Address:* 147, Ibrayev Street, Semey

070150 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7222 627855

*E-mail:* semipalatinsk@fjc.ru

**Semipalatinsk Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Yakov Gorelnikov

*Address:* Semey, Kazakhstan

**Semipalatinsk Jewish Welfare Center**

«Hesed»

*Acting Director:* Irina Bryzhakhina

*Address:* Semey 071400 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7222 565907

**JAMBYL REGION****Taraz Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Roza Golubeva

*Address:* 9, Suleymanov Street, Taraz

080000 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7262 457755,  
430211

**Taraz Jewish Cultural Center «Shivat Zion»**

*Chairperson:* Ludmila Kornilina

*Address:* Taraz, Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7262 459481

*E-mail:* kornilin@nursat.kz

**Taraz Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Taraz»**

*Director:* Elena Dmitrieva

*Address:* 142-58, Kazybek-bi Street,

Taraz 080000 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7262 451489

*E-mail:* hesed@tarazinfo.kz

**KARAGANDY REGION****Jezkazgan Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Sergey Pidgursky

*Address:* 126-1, Abay Street, Jezkazgan

100610 Kazakhstan

**Jezkazgan Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairperson:* Anna Popova

*Address:* Jezkazgan, Kazakhstan

**Karaganda Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Mati Lewis

*Chairman:* Mikhail Falikovich

*Address:* 43-107, Mira Blrd, Karagandy

100075 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7212 522265

*Fax:* 7-7212 517395

*E-mail:* karaganda@fjc.ru

**Karaganda Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Vilen Molotov-Luchansky

*Address:* Karagandy, Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7212 435373

*Fax:* 7-7212 422567

**Karaganda Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Miriam»**

*Chairman of the Board:* Yosif Breydo

*Hesed Director:* Bella Kamenetskaya

*JCC Director:* Irina Kozhanovskaya

*Address:* 47-41, Gogol Street, Karagandy

100068 Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7212 515641,

515227,

515228

*Fax:* 7-7212 515231

*E-mail:* hsdkrq@nets.kz

**Temirtau Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Valery Karlash

*Address:* 17, 3A m/r-n, Temirtau 101400

Kazakhstan

*Phone:* 7-7213 959837

*E-mail:* temirtau@fjc.ru

**KOSTONAY REGION****Jitikara Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Irina Sonchik

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*Address:* 2-D-54, 4th m/r-n, Jitikara,  
Kostonay Region 110700 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-71435 25548  
*E-mail:* zhitikara@fjc.ru

## **Kostonay Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Anatoly Marder  
*Address:* 74, Tolstoy Street, Kostonay  
110000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7142 543032  
*E-mail:* kustanay@fjc.ru

## **Kostonay Jewish Community Center**

*Director:* Eugenia Parkhomenko  
*Address:* 116-308, Al Farabi Street,  
Kostonay 110000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7142 530427, 546765  
*E-mail:* kst\_reboo@comteko.com

## **Kostonay Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Peter Rubinshtein  
*Address:* 96-28, Gogol Street, Kostonay  
110000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7142 500802,  
542479

## **Kostonay Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Kostonay»**

*Chairman of the Board:* Boris Fireshtein  
*Director:* Peter Rubinshtein  
*Address:* 95-46, Letunov Street, Kostonay  
110000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7142 542016, 537918  
*E-mail:* kostxsd@mail.ru,  
kst\_reboo@comteko.com

## **Lisakovsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vyacheslav Shvetz  
*Address:* 3-57, 2nd m/r-n, Lisakovsk  
111200 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-71433 25196

## **Rudny Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Natalia Stukanova  
*Address:* 9-10, Stroitel'naya Street, Rudny  
111500 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-71431 27913,  
75737  
*E-mail:* rudni@fjc.ru

### *KYZYLORDA REGION*

## **Kyzylorda Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Svetlana Kolody  
*Address:* 12-32, Zubenko, Kyzylorda  
120019 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-72422 61456,  
92864

## **Kyzylorda Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairperson:* Ludmila Lee  
*Address:* Kyzylorda 120000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-72422 75745

### *MANGISTAU REGION*

## **Aktau Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Brul  
*Address:* Aktau 130022 Kazakhstan  
*E-mail:* aktau@fjc.ru

## **Aktau Jewish Cultural Center «Shalom»**

*Chairman:* Yury Kerzhbaum  
*Address:* Aktau 130000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7292 514517

### *PAVLODAR REGION*

## **Aksu Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Larisa Shatny  
*Address:* 24-34, Mira Street, Aksu  
140100 Kazakhstan  
*E-mail:* aksu@fjc.ru

**Pavlodar Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Faina Svechinskaya  
*Address:* 54-4, Tarigirov Street, Pavlodar  
140002 Kazakhstan  
*E-mail:* pavlodar@fjc.ru

**Pavlodar Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairperson:* Faina Svechinskaya  
*Address:* 59-105, Lenin Street, Pavlodar,  
Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7182 552817

**Pavlodar Jewish  
Welfare and Community Center  
«Hesed Rahel»**

*Chairman of the Board:* Boris Uzdensky  
*Hesed Director:* Tatiana Slivinskaya  
*JCC Director:* Irina Tveritneva  
*Address:* 44-125, Lermontov Street,  
Pavlodar 140000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7182 320106  
*E-mail:* hsdrahel@nursat.kz

**The Jewish Center of the Pavlodar  
Region - Chabad Lubavitch,  
«Beis Rachel»**

*Chief rabbi of Pavlodar:* rabbi Shmuel  
Karnahukh  
*Address:* 162, Satpayeva Street, Pavlodar  
140000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7182 328100  
*Fax:* 7-7182 328100  
*Web:* www.chabad.kz

*NORTH-KAZAKHSTAN REGION*

**Petropavl Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Svetlana Makarovskaya  
*Address:* Petropavl 150000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7152 336919  
*Fax:* 7-7152 324337  
*E-mail:* petropavlosk@fjc.ru

**Petropavl Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Yuri Evdayev  
*Address:* 27-29, Lenin Street, Petropavl  
152000 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7152 363517

**Petropavl Jewish Welfare and  
Community Center «Hesed Ephraim»**

*Director:* Svetlana Makarovskaya  
*Address:* 52-1, Mukanov Street,  
Petropavl 150007 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7152 363517  
*Fax:* 7-7152 344707  
*E-mail:* hesed\_efraim@mail.online.kz

**Chimkent Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Zelik Murduchayev  
*Address:* 117, Timiryazev Street,  
Shymkent 160006 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7252 324337  
*E-mail:* chimkent@fjc.ru

**Chimkent Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Eduard Atran  
*Address:* Mamash-ula Street, Shymkent,  
Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7252 576547

**Chimkent Jewish Welfare and  
Community Center «Hesed Shimon**

*Hesed Director:* Maria Gurbanova  
*JCC Director:* Elena Udaltsova  
*Address:* 1-42, 16th m/r-n, Shymkent  
160035 Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7252 572604  
*Fax:* 7-7252 576547  
*E-mail:* zabota-shm@nursat.kz,  
fox\_shm@mail.ru

*WEST-KAZAKHSTAN REGION*

**Uralsk Jewish Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Roman Zilberman

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

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Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7112 242807

## **Uralsk Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Golga»**

*Director:* Olga Dergacheva  
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Kazakhstan  
*Phone:* 7-7112 546735  
*E-mail:* hesedgolda\_url@mail.online.kz,  
Golga\_url@mail.ru

## **REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

### *COMMUNITY STRUCTURES*

#### **Jewish Community of the Republic of Korea**

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+82 (2) 544-0834  
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### *RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS*

#### **South Post Chapel Synagogue**

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Reservation, Seoul, Korea  
*Phone:* +82 (31) 720-6688 (mobile),  
+82 (31) 723-9915 (mobile)

### *OFFICIAL STRUCTURES OF ISRAEL*

#### **Embassy of Israel**

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*Phone:* +82 (2) 564-3448,  
+82 (2) 564-3449  
*E-mail:* info@seoul.mfa.gov.il  
*Web:* <http://seoul.mfa.gov.il>

## **KYRGYZSTAN**

#### **Bishkek Jewish Day School**

*Principal:* Vladimir Kritsman

*Address:* 36, 4th m/r-n, Bishkek,  
Kyrgyzstan  
*Phone:* 996-312 510881  
*E-mail:* kritsman\_v@hotmail.com

#### **Jewish Community and Welfare Center «Hesed Tikva»**

*Director:* Rosa Fish  
*Address:* 159, Moskovskaya Street,  
Bishkek 720017 Kyrgyzstan  
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314316,  
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*Fax:* 996-312 315111  
*E-mail:* office@hesed.kg  
*Web:* [www.hesed.kg](http://www.hesed.kg)

#### **Jewish Religious Community of Kyrgyzstan (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi of Kyrgyzstan:* rabbi Arye  
Raichman  
*Chairman:* Vyacheslav Matayev  
*Address:* 193-A, Suyumbayev Street,  
Bishkek 720045 Kyrgyzstan  
*Phone:* 996-312 681966  
*Fax:* 996-312 681966  
*E-mail:* jbishkek@gmail.com  
*Web:* [www.fjc.ru/bishkek](http://www.fjc.ru/bishkek)

#### **Kyrgyzstan Society of Jewish Culture Menorah**

*Chairman:* Boris Shapiro  
*Address:* 78, Pushkin Street, Bishkek  
720017 Kyrgyzstan  
*Phone:* 996-312 664523  
*Web:* [www.menorah.kyrnet.kg](http://www.menorah.kyrnet.kg)

## **MOLDOVA**

#### **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), representative office in Moldova**

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Phone: 373-22 496716,  
496732

E-mail: office@jdc.org.md

Web: www.jewish.md

**Association of Jewish  
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of Moldova**

Co-Chairman: Alexander Bilinkis

Co-Chairman: Alexander Pinchevsky

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**Hebrew Immigration Aid Society  
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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Moscow Jewish Funeral Service**

«Chevra Kadisha»

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Phone: 7-495 410-0209

## **Moscow Jewish Religious Community (Orthodox)**

Chief rabbi of Moscow: rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt

Executive Vice-President: Leopold

Kaimovsky

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Moscow 101000 Russia

Phone: 7-495 940-5557

Fax: 7-495 624-6301

E-mail: info@jewmail.ru

## **Moscow Marina Roscha**

### **Jewish Community**

(Chabad)

President: rabbi Berl Lazar

Chairman: rabbi Zeev Kuravsky

Director: rabbi Michoel Mishulovin

Rabbi: rabbi Shmuel Kuperman

Address: 5A, 2nd Vysheslavtsev Lane,

Moscow 127018 Russia

Phone: 7-495 645-5000

Fax: 7-495 681-2663

E-mail: moscow@fjc.ru,

beit-chabad@jewish.ru,

synagoga@feor.ru

Web: www.synagoga.ru

## **Moscow Otradnoye Jewish Community «Darkei Shalom»**

(Chabad)

Rabbi: rabbi Dovid Karpov

Chairman: Igor Peselev

Address: 19B, Signalny Proezd, Moscow

12723 Russia

Phone: 7-495 221-6548

E-mail: dashalom@mail.ru

Web: www.shalom.org.ru

## **Moscow Perovo Jewish**

**Community Shamir**

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Chairman: rabbi Berl Tsisin

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111396 Russia

Phone: 7-495 375-6677

Fax: 7-495 370-0051

E-mail: bfshamir@yandex.ru

## **Moscow Reform Congregation**

«LeDor VaDor»

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Address: 14/1, Volochaevskaya Street,

Moscow 111033 Russia

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E-mail: ledorvadormoscow@gmail.com

## **Moscow Jewish Community**

«Severnaya» (Reform)

Chairman: Anatoly Vladov

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125445 Russia

Phone: 7-495 457-1306

E-mail: mjc.north@mtu-net.ru

## **Moscow «Sokol-Aeroport»**

**Jewish Community**

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Chairman: rabbi Boruch Kleinberg

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125047 Russia

Phone: 7-495 631-2500

Fax: 7-499 151-4324

E-mail: 770@list.ru

Web: www.jewish.msk.ru

## **The International Jewish Community of Moscow**

Chairman: rabbi Avraham Berkowitz

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**Zelenograd Jewish Community  
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**Moscow Orthodox Jewish Union  
(MOJU)**

*Chairman:* rabbi Tanchum Busin  
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Moscow, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-495 146-1450  
*Web:* www.moju.ru

*YESHOBOT*

**Moscow Yeshiva «Ohaley Yaakov»  
(Orthodox)**

*Director:* rabbi Akiva Yosowitz  
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Street, Moscow 105062 Russia  
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**Moscow Yeshiva «Tomchei Tmimim»  
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744-1646/47  
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*E-mail:* academy.ru@gmail.com  
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**Moscow Yeshiva «Torat Chaim»  
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*JEWISH COMMUNITY  
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**Moscow Jewish Community House  
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*Phone:* 7-495 632-5798/5324/5197  
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**Moscow Jewish Community House in  
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121165 Russia  
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**Moscow Jewish Welfare Center  
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*Director:* Alexander Kirnos  
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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Moscow Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Etel»**

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## **Moscow Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Shaarey Tzedek»**

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## **The CHAMAH International Organisation to Provide Humanitarian Aid and Educational Programs (Moscow Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Chamah»)**

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156-2780,  
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### **Department of Youth Jewish Education, Moscow JCC Marina Roscha**

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## **Moscow Educational Center for Jewish and Israeli Culture «Beit Agnon» (JAFI)**

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## **Moscow Hillel**

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## **Moscow Youth Masorti Congregation MAROM**

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## **Youth Zionist Reform Movement «Netzer» (WUPJ)**

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**Moscow Organisation of former Nazi Victims**

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**Russian Association of former Nazi Victims «RUF»**

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**The International Association of Jews – former Nazi Prisoners**

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**Union of Jewish Invalids and War Veterans, Moscow**

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*Phone:* 7-495 912-0470  
*Web:* www.jmemory.org

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**Moscow Center for Jewish Schools Development**

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**Moscow Center for Jewish Sociological Research**

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**Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization «SEFER»**

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938-5738  
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**Russian Friends of Hebrew University, Moscow office**

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119333 Russia  
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### **Facility for Jewish Studies of Moscow State Maimonides Academy**

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### **Moscow International Institute of XXI century (Jewish University)**

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127273 Russia

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### **Moscow Jewish Institute for Humanities «Machon Chamesh»**

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### **The Russian-American Center for Bible and Jewish Studies of Russian State University for Humanities (Project Judaica)**

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125047 Russia

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### **ADDITIONAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION Center for Informal Jewish Education, Moscow**

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Naberezhnaya, Moscow, Russia

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915-0409

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### **Moscow Center for Jewish Religious Education «Torah Mitzion»**

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623-2309,

624-6493

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*Web:* www.tmtz.ru

**Moscow School of NGO Management and Leadership**

*Executive Director:* Vera Basova  
*Academic Director:* Mikhail Klarin  
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*Phone:* 7-495 366-2378  
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**The Institute for Jewish Studies in the CIS Under the Aegis of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, Moscow**

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*Executive Director:* Chaim Aharon Feigenbaum  
*Deputy Director:* rabbi Ishayahu Gisser  
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**Ulpan Jerusalem in Moscow**

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*Fax:* 7-499 972-6164  
*E-mail:* ulpan@jafi.org

**SCHOOLS**

**Moscow Jewish Boys School «Mesivta»**

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*Phone:* 7-495 980-2770  
*Fax:* 7-495 681-7004

*E-mail:* mesivtarussia@gmail.com  
*Web:* www.mesivta-russia.ru

**Moscow Jewish Girl School «Bet Yehudit»**

*Principal:* Rivka Weiss  
*Address:* 15B, Klara Zetkin Street, Moscow 125299 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-495 450-2158  
*Fax:* 7-495 450-9832  
*E-mail:* bet-egudit@ultranet.ru

**Moscow Jewish School № 1311**

*Principal:* Gregory Lipman  
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132-7538  
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**Moscow Jewish School Achey Tmimim and Beit Rivka**

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625-5485  
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*Web:* www.oravner.com/achey

**Moscow Lauder School «Etz Chaim»**

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624-7302,  
624-8648,  
625-7081  
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etz-chaim@mail.ru

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*Web:* www.etz-chaim.ru

## **Moscow Technological School # 1299 (ORT)**

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Moscow 127055 Russia

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*Fax:* 7-499 972-1210

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*Web:* school.msk.ort.ru

### *KINDERGARTENS*

## **Moscow Jewish Kindergarten «Etz Chaim»**

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*E-mail:* etz-chaim@mail.ru

## **Moscow Jewish Kindergarten «Gan Chaia»**

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*Vice-Principal:* Margarita Karlysheva

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Moscow 101000 Russia

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*Fax:* 7-495 928-5983

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## **Moscow Jewish Kindergarten «Shamir Lauder Chaim»**

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## **Moscow Jewish Orphanage Children of Future («Beth Yeladim»)**

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613-4090

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## **Moscow Jewish Orphanage «Pessin-Waxman Center»**

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## **Moscow Jewish Primary School «Gan Chamah»**

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458-2923

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### *CULTURAL CENTERS*

## **Israeli Cultural Center in Moscow**

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912-5319,  
911-2780

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Moscow

## **Jewish Art Center, Moscow**

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**Holocaust Memorial Museum on  
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6252&SECTIONID=286365

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**«The Aleph» Magazine, Moscow**

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Moscow 101000 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-495 623-1415,  
624-3025  
*Web:* www.kasher.ru

**Kosher restaurant «Jerusalem on  
Bronnaya», Moscow**

*Address:* 6 bld. 3, B. Bronnaya Street,  
Moscow, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-495 290-6266

**Kosher Restaurant «Marina Roscha»,  
Moscow**

*Chief cook:* Pinchas Slobodnik  
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Moscow 127055 Russia  
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E-mail: kosher@kosher.ru

Web: www.kosher.ru

### **Kosher supermarket, Moscow**

Address: 45, Trifonovskaya Street,  
Moscow 129272 Russia

Phone: 7-495 626-8728,  
681-5265,  
681-2941

Fax: 7-495 681-7845

Web: www.kosher.ru

### *ST. PETERSBURG*

### **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Representative office in St. Petersburg**

Representative: Menachem Lepkivker

Address: 153-14, Nevsky Ave.,  
St. Petersburg, Russia

Phone: 7-812 380-0177

Fax: 7-812 275-2033

E-mail: reception@jdcspb.ru

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### **Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies of Philosophy Dept, St. Petersburg State University**

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St. Petersburg, Russia

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### **HOKMA Information and Resource Center, St. Petersburg**

Director: Dmitry Linov

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St. Petersburg, Russia

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E-mail: info@hokma.ru

Web: www.hokma.ru

### **Information portal Jewish life of St. Petersburg**

Address: St. Petersburg, Russia

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### **Information portal of Petersburg Chabad Congregation**

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### **Israeli Cultural Center in St. Petersburg**

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719-8756,  
272-7887

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### **Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in St. Petersburg**

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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

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**Russian Jewish Congress (REK),  
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**St. Petersburg Center for Open Jewish  
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**St. Petersburg Chabad Congregation's  
Welfare Center**

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**St. Petersburg Funeral service «Chevra  
kadisha»**

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**St. Petersburg Kindergarten «Gan  
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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

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**St. Petersburg Hillel**

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**St. Petersburg Jewish Day School «Beit Sefer Menachem» at school № 108**

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**St. Petersburg Jewish Day School «Or Avner» at school № 224**

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**St. Petersburg Jewish Day School «Shorashim» at school № 550**

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*Fax:* 7-812 571-0449

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**St. Petersburg Jewish Day School «Yerushalayim» at school № 274**

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**St. Petersburg Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Avraam»**

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**St. Petersburg Judaica Center**

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**St. Petersburg Kindergartens «Adain Lo»**

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**St. Petersburg New Jewish School at school № 374**

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**St. Petersburg Newspaper «Kol Dodi»**

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**St. Petersburg Reform Jewish Congregation «Sha'arei Shalom»**

*Chairperson:* Maria Ukradyzhenko  
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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **St. Petersburg Sefarad Community**

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## **St. Petersburg Yeshiva «Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch» – Center of Jewish Education**

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## **Teachers' Almanac «New Jewish School», St. Petersburg**

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## **Teachers' Association «New Jewish School» (NESH), St. Petersburg**

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## **World Congress of Georgian Jews, Russian branch, St. Petersburg**

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### *ADYGHEYA*

## **Maykop Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Salavat Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Sterlitamak Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Ufa Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Leya»**

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**Ulan-Ude Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**DAGESTAN**

**Buynaksk Jewish Community**

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## **Makhachkala Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Nalchik Jewish Community Center «Tovushi»**

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## **Nalchik Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Imid»**

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### **KALMYKIA**

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### **KARELIA**

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## **Petrozavodsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**KHAKASSIA**

**Abakan Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Abakan Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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**KOMI**

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**Syktyvkar Jewish Community**  
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## **Vorkuta Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## *MARI EL*

### **Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy of Republic of Mari El**

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### **Yoshkar Ola Jewish Community**

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## *MORDOVIA*

### **Saransk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## *NORTH OSSETIA – ALANIA*

### **Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy of Republic of North Ossetia – Alania**

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### **Mozdok Jewish Community «Tikva» (Chabad)**

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### **Vladikavkaz Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### **Vladikavkaz Jewish Cultural Society «Sholom»**

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## *SAKHA (YAKUTIA)*

### **Yakutsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**TATARSTAN**

**Kazan Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Kazan Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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**Kazan Jewish Day School  
«Mishpahteynu» at school # 12**

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**Kazan ORT Center**

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**Kazan Youth Jewish Center «Afifon»  
(Hillel)**

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**Naberezhnye Chelny Jewish  
Community (Chabad)**

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**Nizhnekamsk Jewish Community  
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**Tatarstan Jewish Community and  
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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

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## *UDMURT REPUBLIC*

### **Izhevsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### **Izhevsk Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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### **Izhevsk Jewish Community and Welfare Center «Hesed Ariel»**

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### **Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy of Udmurt Republic**

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### **Sarapul Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### **Sarapul Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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## *ALTAY REGION*

### **Barnaul Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### **Biysk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### **Rubtsovsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*KHABAROVSK REGION*

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**Khabarovsk Jewish Community  
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**Khabarovsk Reform  
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*KRASNODAR REGION*

**Anapa Jewish Community  
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**Armavir Jewish Community  
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**Gelenjik Jewish Community  
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## **Jewish Community and Welfare Center «Hesed Tikva»**

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## **Jewish Community and Welfare Center «Hesed Yachad»**

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## **Krasnodar Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Krasnodar Municipal Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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## **Krasnodar Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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## **Novorossiysk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Novorossiysk Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Milev»**

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## **Sochi Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Temryuk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Tuapse Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**KRASNOYARSK REGION**

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**Achinsk Jewish Congregation  
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**Jewish Community of Greater Norilsk  
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**Krasnoyarsk Jewish Community  
«Menora»**

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**Krasnoyarsk Jewish Community  
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**Krasnoyarsk Regional Jewish National  
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## **Minussinsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### *PERM REGION*

## **Berezniki Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Perm Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Perm Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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## **Perm Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Kohav»**

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## **Perm Reform Congregation**

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## **Perm Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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### *PRIMORSKY REGION*

## **Arseniev Jewish Community**

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## **Artem Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Nakhodka Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Partizansk Jewish Community  
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**Primorye Regional  
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**Ussuriysk Jewish Community  
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**Vladivostok Jewish  
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**Vladivostok Jewish Community and  
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**STAVROPOL REGION**

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**Kislovodsk Jewish Community  
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**Nevinnomyssk Jewish Community  
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## **Pyatigorsk Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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## **Pyatigorsk Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Bentzion»**

Chairman of Board: Alexey Nasimov  
Director: Valentina Kostromina  
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357520 Russia  
Phone: 7-8793 323389,  
323500  
E-mail: hesedbencion@mail.ru

## **Stavropol Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Efim Fainer  
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Phone: 7-8652 281295  
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### *TRANS-BAIKAL REGION*

## **Chita Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Boris Eremin  
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672010 Russia

Phone: 7-3022 421290,  
262231  
E-mail: chita@fjc.ru

## **Chita Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

President: Arkady Shemelin  
Address: 19, Ingodinskaya Street, Chita  
672010 Russia  
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Fax: 7-3022 416454  
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## **Sretensk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Viktor Yakobson  
Address: Sretensk, Chita Region, Russia  
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Fax: 7-30246 91262  
E-mail: sretensk@fjc.ru

### *AMUR REGION*

## **Amur Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

Acting president: Ludmila Mazina  
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Street, Blagoveschensk, Amur Region  
675000 Russia  
Phone: 7-4162 304160  
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## **Blagoveschensk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Valery Malinovsky  
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Street, Blagoveschensk, Amur Region  
675000 Russia  
Phone: 7-4162 304160  
E-mail: blagoveschensk@fjc.ru

### *ARKHANGELSK REGION*

## **Arkhangelsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Vladimir Boyvkin

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Arkhangelsk 163000 Russia  
Phone: 7-8182 275480,  
247935  
E-mail: arkhangelsk@fjc.ru  
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**Arkhangelsk Regional  
Jewish National and Cultural  
Autonomy**

Chairman of Board: Valery Gaupzman  
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Arkhangelsk 163000 Russia  
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**Jewish Community and Welfare  
Center «Hesed Ahim**

Chairman of Board: Valery Gaupzman  
Director: Igor Prober  
Address: 311, Lomonosov Ave.,  
Arkhangelsk 163045 Russia  
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E-mail: ahim@atnet.ru  
Web: homepages.atnet.ru/ahim

**Naryan-Mar Jewish Community  
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Region, Russia  
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43092  
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**Severodvinsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

Chairman: Mikhail Simkin  
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**BELGOROD REGION**

**Belgorod Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Belgorod Regional Jewish National  
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**BRYANSK REGION**

**Bryansk Jewish Community «Ohel  
Yaakov» (Orthodox)**

Chairman: Evgeny Udler  
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**Bryansk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Lev Linkov  
Rabbi: rabbi Menachem Mendel Zaklos  
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E-mail: bryansk@fjc.ru

**Bryansk Regional Jewish Community  
and Welfare Center «Hesed Tikva»**

Chairman of Board: Alexander  
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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

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691828  
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691559  
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## **Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy of Bryansk region**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Titelman  
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## **Klintsy Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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Bryansk Region, Russia  
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### *CHELYABINSK REGION*

## **Chebarkul Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Boris Goslavsky  
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## **Chelyabinsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Meir Kirsh  
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263-3618,  
263-3419  
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## **Chelyabinsk Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Nechama»**

*Chairman of Board:* Abram Livshitz  
*Director:* Albert Rukhman  
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Chelyabinsk 454007 Russia  
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729-7062  
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729-7063  
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## **Chelyabinsk Reform Congregation**

*Chairman:* Evgeny Dobin  
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## **Korkino Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Kyshtym Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Magnitogorsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Magnitogorsk Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Ezra Haverim»**

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Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk Region  
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*Phone:* 7-3519 206944,  
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**Miass Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Ozersk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Anatoly Feldman  
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**Troitsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*IVANOVO REGION*

**Ivanovo Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Kineshma Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*IRKUTSK REGION*

**Angarsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Bratsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Irkutsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*Chairman:* Vladimir Khazanov  
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**Irkutsk Jewish Cultural Center «Hesed Hayad»**

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## **Irkutsk Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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### *KALININGRAD REGION*

## **Kaliningrad Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*Chairman:* Zinovy Yakobson  
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## **Kaliningrad Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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### *KALUGA REGION*

## **Kaluga Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*Phone:* 7-4842 575322  
*E-mail:* kaluga@fjc.ru

## **Kaluga Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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## **Kaluga Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

*President:* Zakhar Ser  
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## **Obninsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Zakhar Ser  
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### *KAMCHATKA REGION*

## **Petropavlovsk Kamchatsky Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Sergey Kurbatov  
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### *KEMEROVO REGION*

## **Belovo Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Valery Menschikov  
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## **Kemerovo Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Dovid De Bresser  
*Chairman:* Ilya Bondarenko  
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*Phone:* 7-3842 362998  
*E-mail:* kemerovo@fjc.ru

## **Kemerovo Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

*President:* Ilya Bondarenko  
*Vice-President:* Yury Medovy

*Vice-President:* Alla Osherovich  
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**Kemerovo Society for Jewish Culture**

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**Novokuznetsk Jewish Community  
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**Prokopievsk Jewish Community  
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*Chairman:* Ilya Gurgov  
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**Yurga Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*KIROV REGION*

**Kirov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Kirov Jewish Welfare and Community  
Center «Hesed Hatikva»**

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610016 Russia  
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*E-mail:* hesed-kirov@rambler.ru

**Kirov Regional Jewish National and  
Cultural Autonomy**

*Chairman:* Yury Shlemenon  
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610000 Russia  
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*KOSTROMA REGION*

**Jewish National and Cultural  
Autonomy of Kostroma Region**

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Russia  
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*Fax:* 7-4942 312770  
*E-mail:* kostroma@fjc.ru

**Kostroma Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

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*Chairman:* Aron Shtykov  
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156013 Russia  
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315933,  
514388  
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**Kostroma Jewish Welfare Center  
«Hasdei Zion»**

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*Director:* Ita Nechaeva

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156013 Russia  
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312770

*Fax:* 7-4942 315933  
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## **Sharya Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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Rusisa  
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### *KURGAN REGION*

## **Kurgan Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*Phone:* 7-3522 461608  
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## **Kurgan Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Chaim»**

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### *KURSK REGION*

## **Kursk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Kursk Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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## **Kursk Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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### *LENINGRAD REGION*

## **Jewish Community of Greater Vyborg (Chabad)**

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32812  
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## **Priozersk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### *LIPETSK REGION*

## **Elets Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Elets Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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**Lebedyan Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

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**Lipetsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Lipetsk Jewish Welfare and  
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**Lipetsk Reform Congregation**

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**Zadonsk Jewish Community  
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*MAGADAN REGION*

**Magadan Jewish Community  
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**Magadan Jewish Community  
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*MOSCOW REGION*

**Dubna Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Lyubertsy District Jewish Community  
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Moscow Region 140000 Russia  
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**Malakhovka Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Moishe Tamarin  
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**Mytischki Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Orekhovo-Zuyevo Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Pushkino Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Reutov Jewish Community Hineyni**

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*Rabbi:* rabbi Rafael Soyfer  
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## **Saltykovka Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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## **Stupino Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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## **Zhukovsky Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### MURMANSK REGION

## **Murmansk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Murmansk Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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*E-mail:* gazeta@evreinn.ru  
*Web:* www.evreinn.ru

**Dzerzhinsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Pinchas Klimash  
*Chairman:* Roman Zitser  
*Address:* Dzerzhinsk, Nizhny Novgorod  
Region, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8313 333733  
*E-mail:* dzerzhinsk@fjc.ru

**Nizhny Novgorod Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Shimon Bergman  
*Chairman:* Eduard Chaprak  
*Address:* 5-A, Gruzinskaya Street, Nizhny  
Novgorod 603005 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-831 433-3619,  
434-4050  
*Fax:* 7-831 434-4907  
*E-mail:* nnovgorod@fjc.ru,  
sinagoga@evreinn.ru  
*Web:* www.evreinn.ru

**Nizhny Novgorod Jewish  
Welfare and Community Center  
«Hesed Sarah»**

*Chairman of Board:* Mark Feldman  
*Director:* Julia Gornushenkova  
*Address:* 6-A, Dobrolyubov Street,  
Nizhny Novgorod 603019 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-831 433-4021,  
434-1414  
*Fax:* 7-831 433-0670  
*E-mail:* hesednn@mts-nn.ru

**Nizhny Novgorod Regional  
Jewish National and Cultural  
Autonomy**

*Executive Director:* Susanna Turayeva  
*Address:* Nizhny Novgorod, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-831 430-2055  
*Fax:* 7-831 463-8571  
*E-mail:* nenkar@mail.ru

**Sarov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Dmitry Demin  
*Address:* Sarov, Nizhny Novgorod  
Region, Russia  
*E-mail:* sarov@fjc.ru

*NOVGOROD REGION*

**Borovichi Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Eduard Alexeyev  
*Address:* 25/27, Sovetskaya Street,  
Borovichi, Novgorod Region, Russia  
*Phone:* 222631  
*Fax:* 738024  
*E-mail:* borovichi@fjc.ru

**Novgorod Society of Jewish Culture  
(Welfare Center «Hesed Yakov»)**

*Chairman of the Hesed Board:* Yevsey  
Berdichevsky  
*Director:* Ludmila Ankudinova  
*Address:* 9-3, Boyan Street, Novgorod

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

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Phone: 7-8162 661229  
Fax: 7-8162 661229  
E-mail: jacobnoek@novgorod.net  
Web: www.natm.ru/jacob/

## **Veliky Novgorod Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Gershon Paley  
*Chairman:* Gregory Fainberg  
*Address:* 9, Boyan Street, Novgorod  
Veliky 173015 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8162 664701,  
663790  
*E-mail:* fineberg@yandex.ru

## **Veliky Novgorod Jewish Community Fund**

*Director:* Alexander Knopov  
*Address:* 8, B. Dvortsovaya Street, Veliky  
Novgorod 173000 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8162 196867  
*Fax:* 7-8162 196477  
*E-mail:* root@acron.vnov.ru

### *NOVOSIBIRSK REGION*

## **Akademgorodok Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Emil Koshnir  
*Address:* Akademgorodok, Novosibirsk,  
Russia  
*E-mail:* akademgorodok@fjc.ru

## **Israeli Cultural Center in Novosibirsk**

*Director:* Boris Belodubrovsky  
*Address:* 74, Krasny Ave., Novosibirsk  
630091 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-383 216-6183,  
226-7737  
*Fax:* 7-383 228-2829  
*E-mail:* novoicc@il4u.org.il  
*Web:* www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/  
Novo

## **Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in Novosibirsk**

*Head of delegation:* Irina Lotman  
*Address:* 32, Kamenskaya Street,  
Novosibirsk 630099 Russia  
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218-8387,  
218-8385,  
218-8381

*Fax:* 7-383 218-8389  
*E-mail:* irinal@jafi.org  
*Web:* www.earsibir.ru

## **Novosibirsk Hillel**

*Director:* Minja Fishman  
*Address:* 41, Sibirskaya Street,  
Novosibirsk 630132 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-383 221-6554  
*E-mail:* hillel@gorodok.net  
*Web:* hillel.gorodok.net

## **Novosibirsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Shneur-Zalman Zaklas  
*Chairman:* Semyon Osheroov  
*Address:* 85, Gorky Street, Novosibirsk  
630099 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-383 222-2023,  
222-2151  
*Fax:* 7-383 223-7704  
*E-mail:* novosibirsk@fjc.ru

## **Novosibirsk Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Baruch Blam  
*Address:* 163-13, Bogatkov Street,  
Novosibirsk 630017 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-383 260-6300  
*E-mail:* blam\_baruch@ngs.ru

## **Novosibirsk Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Hatikva»**

*Chairman of Board:* Evgeny Fainshil

*Director:* Alla Olkhova  
*Address:* 41, Sibirskaya Street,  
Novosibirsk 630132 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-383 221-0913,  
221-1357  
*Fax:* 7-383 227-0517  
*E-mail:* atikva@online.nsk.ru,  
shelma65@mail.ru  
*Corporation:* JCC/Hesed

**Novosibirsk Regional Jewish National  
and Cultural Autonomy**

*President:* Elena Turetskaya  
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630091 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-383 222-3252  
*Fax:* 7-383 217-2270  
*E-mail:* turetskaya@mail.ru

**OMSK REGION**

**Omsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Asher Krichevsky  
*Chairman:* Gennady Fridman  
*Address:* 53, Marshall Zhukov Street,  
Omsk 644024 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-3812 313307,  
534508  
*Fax:* 7-3812 307289  
*E-mail:* omsk@fjc.ru

**Omsk Jewish Community Center  
(hesed)**

*Chairman of Board:* Eduard Kotlyar  
*Director:* Yakov Birlyant  
*Address:* 3, Chernyshevsky Street, Omsk  
644024 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-3812 211128,  
*Fax:* 7-3812 211126  
*E-mail:* hesed-oms@mail.ru

**Omsk Regional Jewish National and  
Cultural Autonomy**

*Co-Chairman:* Yakov Birlyant

*Co-Chairman:* Yury Karasikov  
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Omsk 644024 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-3812 211126,  
316584  
*Fax:* 7-3812 211128  
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**ORENBURG REGION**

**Jewish National and Cultural  
Autonomy of Orenburg Region**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Ader  
*Address:* Orenburg, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-3532 776662  
*Fax:* 7-3532 774960  
*E-mail:* orenka@mail.ru

**Orenburg Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Goel Myers  
*Chairman:* Yuli Tverdokhlib  
*Address:* 3, Shevchenko Lane, Orenburg,  
Russia  
*Phone:* 7-3532 575127  
*Fax:* 7-3532 575327  
*E-mail:* orenburg@fjc.ru

**Orenburg Jewish Welfare and  
Community Center «Aviv Hadash»  
(Hesed)**

*Chairman of Board:* Vitaly Leizerman  
*Director:* Irina Shestakova  
*Address:* 23, 9th Yanvaryia Street,  
Orenburg 460014 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-3532 757787  
*Fax:* 7-3532 757787  
*E-mail:* avivhadash@mail.ru

**Orsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Yoffe  
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*Phone:* 7-3537 258582  
*Fax:* 7-3537 263879  
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## OREL REGION

### **Orel Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Semyon Livshitz  
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Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4862 752556,  
752442  
*Fax:* 7-4862 754921  
*E-mail:* shalom@fjc.ru

### **Orel Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Yakov Leibin  
*Address:* 35, 3rd Kurskaya Street, Orel  
302040 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4862 427119  
*E-mail:* orel@nesher.ru

### **Orel Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Nesher» (Hesed)**

*Chairman of Board:* Valery Shapiro  
*Director:* Tamila Belotserkovskaya  
*Address:* 35, 3rd Kurskaya Street, Orel  
302040 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4862 427119  
*Fax:* 7-4862 427119  
*E-mail:* orel@nesher.ru  
*Web:* www.nesher.ru

### **Orel Reform Congregation**

*Chairperson:* Nina Vlasova  
*Youth Coordinator:* Alexandra  
Ponomareva  
*Address:* Orel 302025 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4862 333670  
*E-mail:* kofmana@mail.ru

### **Orel Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

*President:* Semyon Livshitz  
*Address:* 18, Leskov Street, Orel 302028  
Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4862 752442  
*E-mail:* shalomorel@rambler.ru

## PENZA REGION

### **Kuznetsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Trabinovich  
*Address:* Kuznetsk, Penza Region, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-84157 25746  
*E-mail:* kuznetsk@fjc.ru

### **Penza Hillel**

*Director:* Sergey Vakulenko  
*Address:* 52, Maxim Gorky Street, Penza  
440600 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8412 562985  
*E-mail:* pandirector@mail.ru

### **Penza Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Tsesis  
*Address:* 52, Maxim Gorky Street, Penza  
440600 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8412 562985,  
561577,  
553128  
*Fax:* 7-8412 561177  
*E-mail:* ero-penza@mail.ru

### **Penza Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hatikva» (Hesed)**

*Chairman of Board:* Zakhar Levin  
*Director:* Yury Sorokin  
*Address:* 52, Maxim Gorky Street, Penza  
440600 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8412 561577  
*Fax:* 7-8412 561177  
*E-mail:* atikva@tl.ru,  
atikva@sura.ru

**Penza Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

*President:* Leib Zlotzky  
*Address:* 52, Maxim Gorky Street, Penza 440600 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8412 561577  
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*PSKOV REGION*

**Pskov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Roman Kagan  
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*Phone:* 7-8112 722019  
*Fax:* 7-8112 721657  
*E-mail:* pskov@fjc.ru

**Pskov Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Yitzchak»**

*Chairman of Board:* Roman Kagan  
*Director:* Bella Litvak  
*Address:* 6-1001, Rosa Luxemburg Street, Pskov 180007 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8112 445952  
*Fax:* 7-8112 722019  
*E-mail:* hesed@ellink.ru  
*Web:* ngo.pskov.ru/jewish

**Velikie Luki Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Alexander Kunitsa  
*Address:* 9-A, Lev Tolstoy Street, Velikie Luki, Pskov Region 182100 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-81153 58796  
*Fax:* 7-81153 58796  
*E-mail:* velikie\_luki@fjc.ru

**Velikie Luki Jewish Welfare Center «Magen Hesed»**

*Chairman of Board:* Alexander Kunitsa  
*Director:* Frizantina Zusman  
*Address:* 3-52, Leutenant Shmidt Naberezhnaya, Velikie Luki, Pskov

Region 182100 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-81153 36502  
*Fax:* 7-81153 36394  
*E-mail:* anna@mart.ru

*ROSTOV REGION*

**American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Representative office in Rostov-on-Don**

*Representative:* Zvika Timberg  
*Address:* 60-503, Teatralny Ave., Rostov-on-Don, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-863 253-5800  
*Fax:* 7-863 251-3901  
*E-mail:* jdc@aaanet.ru

**Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in Rostov-on-Don**

*Head of delegation:* Leonid Sherman  
*Address:* 14-A, Nagibin Street, Rostov-on-Don 344038 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-863 230-1504  
*Fax:* 7-863 230-1503  
*E-mail:* leonids@jafi.org

**Novocherkassk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Boris Legran  
*Address:* Novocherkassk, Rostov Region, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-86352 26576,  
27577,  
27578  
*E-mail:* novocherkassk@fjc.ru

**Rostov Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

*Co-Chairman:* Yury Rubinov  
*Address:* 18/68, Gazetny Lane, Rostov-on-Don 344002 Russia  
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299-0268

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*Fax:* 7-863 262-4119  
*E-mail:* jcommunity@mail.ru

## **Rostov-on-Don Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Chaim Fridman  
*Chairman:* Yury Rubinov  
*Address:* 68/18, Turgenevskaya Street,  
Rostov-on-Don 344007 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-863 262-3309  
*Fax:* 7-863 262-4119  
*E-mail:* rostov-on-don@fjc.ru

## **Rostov-on-Don Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Yakov Lukovsky  
*Address:* Rostov-on-Don, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-863 295-3200

## **Rostov-on-Don Jewish Family Center «Azmaut»**

*Director:* Mikhail Apilevich  
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Rostov-on-Don 344038 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-863 218-3361  
*Fax:* 7-863 218-3362  
*E-mail:* azmaut@spark-mail.ru

## **Rostov-on-Don Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Sholom Ber»**

*Chairman of Board:* P. Goldshmidt  
*Director:* Tatiana Mindjoraya  
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Rostov-on-Don 344007 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-863 299-0914,  
262-5808  
*Fax:* 7-863 299-0963  
*E-mail:* hesed@aanet.ru

## **Shakhty Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Isaak Mindlin  
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*Phone:* 7-8636 220109,  
255451  
*E-mail:* shahty@fjc.ru

## **Taganrog Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Tankha Otershtein  
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*Phone:* 7-8634 391018  
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### **RYAZAN REGION**

## **Kasimov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Lipkovker  
*Address:* 5, Karl Libknecht Street,  
Kasimov, Ryazan Region, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-49131 42436  
*E-mail:* kasimov@fjc.ru

## **Ryazan Jewish Community Techiya (Chabad)**

*Chairperson:* Ludmila Zakharova  
*Rabbi:* rabbi Efraim Zilberman  
*Address:* 56, Pravolybedskaya Street,  
Ryazan 390035 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4912 963426  
*Fax:* 7-4912 764598  
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## **Ryazan Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Teshuva»**

*Chairman of Board:* Leonid Tseitlin  
*Director:* Ludmila Zakharova  
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390035 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4912 963426  
*Fax:* 7-4912 764598  
*E-mail:* tshuva@rambler.ru

## **Ryazan Reform Congregation**

*Chairman:* Slava Bolotnikov  
*Youth Coordinator:* Artem Tyurin  
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**Ryazan Regional  
Jewish National and Cultural  
Autonomy**

*Chairman of Board:* Leonid Reznikov  
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Ryazan 390005 Russia  
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*SAMARA REGION*

**Jewish Agency for Israel  
(JAFI), Representative office in  
Samara**

*Head of delegation:* Michael Tilkin  
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Samara 443096 Russia  
Phone: 7-846 263-7443,  
334-8221,  
334-9458

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E-mail: michael@jafi.org

**Jewish National and Cultural  
Autonomy of Samara region**

*President:* Mikhail Kaplan  
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Fax: 7-846 333-7710  
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**Novokuybyshevsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Aron Bergal  
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Region, Russia  
Phone: 7-84635 37323  
E-mail: novokuibyshevsk@fjc.ru

**Samara Chevra Kadish  
(Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Boris Pesin  
Address: Samara, Russia  
Phone: 7-846 249-5608

**Samara Jewish Community  
«Nechama» (Orthodox)**

*Chairperson:* Tatiana Kurilova  
Address: 22-A, Aerodromnaya Street,  
Samara, Russia  
Phone: 7-846 268-5788  
E-mail: nechama@samtel.ru

**Samara Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Shlomo Deutch  
*Chairman:* Mikhail Safronchik  
Address: 84-B, Chapayevskaya Street,  
Samara, Russia  
Phone: 7-846 333-4064  
Fax: 7-846 332-0242  
E-mail: samara@fjc.ru

**Samara Jewish Community  
(Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Evgeny Kaganov  
*Rabbi:* rabbi Shmuel Weiss  
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443009 Russia  
Phone: 7-846 332-2173  
E-mail: rosero@samtel.ru  
Web: www.jewishsamara.ru

**Samara Jewish Welfare Center  
«Hesed Esther»**

*Chairman of Board:* Anna Spon  
*Director:* Raisa Gardshnikova  
Address: 16, Lenin Ave., Samara 443110  
Russia  
Phone: 7-846 279-2081  
Fax: 7-846 279-2038  
E-mail: hesther@samara.ru

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## **Samara Jewish Youth Center**

«Migrash»

*Director:* Olga Kupchik

*Address:* 52-326, Michurin Street,

Samara 443096 Russia

*Phone:* 7-846 279-2076

*E-mail:* yankin2005@mail.ru

## **Samara Reform Congregation**

*Chairman:* Eduard Tsymbalov

*Address:* Samara, Russia

*Phone:* 7-846 334-2331

*E-mail:* lehaim@samaramail.ru

## **Samara Regional Jewish Religious Congress (Orthodox)**

*President:* Mikhail Kaplan

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Shmuel Weiss

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Samara, Russia

*Phone:* 7-846 332-4056,

333-4820

*Fax:* 7-846 333-7710

*E-mail:* keroso@samtel.ru

*Web:* www.jewishsamara.ru

## **Syzran Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Lev Kushnev

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*Phone:* 7-8464 984838

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## **Syzran Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Nikonov

*Director:* Mikhail Zus

*Address:* Syzran, Samara Region, Russia

*Phone:* 7-8464 321201

## **Toliatti Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Meir Fisher

*Chairman:* Alexander Nagelberg

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Togliatti, Samara Region, Russia

*Phone:* 7-8482 730284

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## SARATOV REGION

### **Balakovo Jewish Community Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Dmitry Andrianov

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*E-mail:* balakovo@fjc.ru

### **Balashov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Vendrov

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### **Engels Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Viktor Birbraer

*Address:* Engels, Saratov Region, Russia

*Phone:* 7-8453 962490

*Fax:* 7-8453 540870

*E-mail:* engels@fjc.ru

### **Saratov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Yakov Kubichek

*Chairman:* Alexander Lazerson

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Russia

*Phone:* 7-8452 215800

*Fax:* 7-8452 510178

*E-mail:* saratov@fjc.ru

### **Saratov Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* rabbi Michoel Frumin

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410005 Russia

*Phone:* 7-8452 215701

*Fax:* 7-8452 277231

*E-mail:* [synagogue@jewishsaratorov.ru](mailto:synagogue@jewishsaratorov.ru)  
*Web:* [www.jewishsaratorov.ru](http://www.jewishsaratorov.ru)

### **Saratov Jewish Welfare Center**

«**Hasdei Yerushalayim**»

*Chairman of Board:* Yuri Vitkin

*Director:* Irina Moshel

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524044,  
523696,  
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#### *SAKHALIN REGION*

### **Korsakov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Leonid Mironov

*Address:* Korsakov, Sakhalin Region,  
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*Phone:* 7-42435 21203

*Fax:* 7-42435 25279

*E-mail:* [korsakov@fjc.ru](mailto:korsakov@fjc.ru)

### **Tomari Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Bystritsky

*Address:* Tomari, Sakhalin Region, Russia

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*E-mail:* [tomari@fjc.ru](mailto:tomari@fjc.ru)

### **Uglegorsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Gregory Krumer

*Address:* Uglegorsk, Sakhalin Region,  
Russia

*Phone:* 7-42432 21051

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### **Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Veneslav Kotman

*Address:* Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia

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#### *SVERDLOVSK REGION*

### **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Representative office in Ekaterinburg**

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Ekaterinburg 626026 Russia

*Phone:* 7-343 254-6980

*Fax:* 7-343 261-5556

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### **Ekaterinburg Hillel**

*Director:* Alexey Zaidman

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620100 Russia

*Phone:* 7-343 220-4106

*Fax:* 7-343 224-8269

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*Web:* [www.gillel.netteh.ru](http://www.gillel.netteh.ru)

### **Ekaterinburg Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Zelig Ashkenazi

*Chairman:* Yakov Soskin

*Address:* 38-A, Kuybyshev Street,  
Ekaterinburg 620026 Russia

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### **Ekaterinburg Jewish Community Center «Menora»**

*Chairman of Board:* Yuri Kiselgof

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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Ekaterinburg Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Menorah»**

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## **Nizhny Tagil Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Alef»**

*Chairman of Board:* Mikhail Zolotukhin

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Tagil, Sverdlovsk Region 622034 Russia

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## **Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in Ekaterinburg**

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*Fax:* 7-343-3658286

*E-mail:* sergeyg@jafi.org

*Web:* www.ear-ural.ru

## **Novouralsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Kamensk-Uralsky Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*Phone:* 7-34378 59425

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## **Pervouralsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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Russia

*E-mail:* pervouralsk@fjc.ru

## **Krasnoturinsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Loginov

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*Phone:* 7-34314 35952

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*E-mail:* krasnoturinsk@fjc.ru

## **Polevskoy Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Bendovsky

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Sverdlovsk Region, Russia

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## **Nizhny Tagil Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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Tagil, Sverdlovsk Region 622034 Russia

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## **Revda Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Serov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Ratnovsky  
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**Sverdlovsk Regional Jewish National  
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Ekaterinburg 620014 Russia  
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**Verkhnyaya Pyshma Jewish  
Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Boris Kaufman  
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Region, Russia  
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**SMOLENSK REGION****Roslavl Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Viktor Goryachkin  
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Russia  
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*E-mail:* roslavl@fjc.ru

**Smolensk Association of Jewish  
Communities (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Victor Gitlin  
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*Phone:* 7-4812 382336  
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**Smolensk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief rabbi:* rabbi Levi Mondshine  
*Chairman:* Zinovy Agranat

*Address:* 13, Vorobyev Street, Smolensk,  
Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4812 665856  
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**Smolensk Jewish Community  
Chaverim (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Umansky  
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Smolensk 214000 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4812 512835  
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**Smolensk Jewish Community Derech  
Hashem (Orthodox)**

*Acting Chairperson:* Marina Trubina  
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Smolensk 214000 Russia  
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**Smolensk Regional Jewish National  
and Cultural Autonomy**

*Chairman of Board:* Dmitry Levant  
*Deputy Chairman of Board:* Boris  
Kugelev  
*Executive director:* Irina Idelevich  
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Smolensk 214000 Russia  
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**Vyazma Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Krepkanovich  
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Russia  
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24804  
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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## TAMBOV REGION

### **Tambov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Arkady Farba  
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Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4752 729733  
*E-mail:* tambov@fjc.ru

### **Tambov Jewish Welfare Center «Nash Dom» (Hesed)**

*Chairman of Board:* Lev Mechkovsky  
*Director:* Natalia Seregina  
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392002 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4752 757565  
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*E-mail:* hesed@tmb.ru

### **Tambov Reform Congregation**

*Chairperson:* Natalia Mokhova  
*Address:* 10-3, Engels Street, Tambov  
392002 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-910 752-2182  
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## TVER REGION

### **Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy of Tver Region**

*Chairman of the Board:* Igor Elgardt  
*Address:* Tver, Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4822 312481  
*E-mail:* zabota@tvcom.ru

### **Tver Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Spivak  
*Rabbi:* rabbi Yehoshua Rosenzveig  
*Address:* 22, Pushkinskaya Street, Tver,  
Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4822 346712  
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### **Tver Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed»**

*Chairperson of Board:* Sofia Elgart  
*Director:* Irina Edelshtein  
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170000 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4822 481717,  
433833  
*Fax:* 7-4822 341717  
*E-mail:* zabota@tvcom.ru

### **Tver Reform Congregation**

*Chairperson:* Marina Fleys  
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170000 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-4822 323613  
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keshernet-tver@mail.ru

### **Udomlya Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Gregory Gringlaz  
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## TOMSK REGION

### **Tomsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Levi Kaminetsky  
*President:* Yury Zelvensky  
*Chairman:* Boris Romatsky  
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Tomsk 634009 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-3822 513116,  
514783  
*Fax:* 7-3822 515769  
*E-mail:* tomsk@fjc.ru,  
syntero@inbox.ru  
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### **Tomsk Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

*President:* Yury Zelvensky

Address: 96, Krasnoarmeyskaya Street,  
Tomsk 634041 Russia  
Phone: 7-3822 432220,  
513116  
Fax: 7-3822 432225  
E-mail: ydzel@mail.ru,  
tomsoch.e2@rambler.ru

#### *TULA REGION*

##### **Tula Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Lev Raikhlin  
Address: 12, Lenin Street, Tula 300041  
Russia  
Phone: 7-4872 365529,  
308762  
Fax: 7-4872 367363  
E-mail: tula@fjc.ru  
Web: eo.ginf.ru

##### **Tula Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

Chairman: Gregory Sanevich  
Rabbi: rabbi Ariel Masalitin  
Address: 41, Svoboda Street, Tula, Russia  
Web: www.tulajew.ru

##### **Tula Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hasdei Neshama» (hesed)**

Chairman of Board: Vladimir Fridliander  
President: Faina Sanevich  
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Phone: 7-4872 210167  
E-mail: neshama@tula.net

##### **Tula Reform Congregation**

Chairperson: Marina Konstantinova  
Community Worker: Anatoly Lvovich  
Youth Coordinator: Mikhail Kulitsky  
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Phone: 7-4872 354276  
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##### **Tula Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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Russia  
Phone: 7-4872 308762  
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#### *TYUMEN REGION*

##### **Tyumen Jewish Community (Reform)**

Chairman: Rafael Goldberg  
Acting Rabbi: Igor Varkin  
Youth Coordinator: Anna Shnitser  
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Russia  
Phone: 7-3452 457127,  
456612  
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#### *ULYANOVSK REGION*

##### **Dimitrovgrad Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Gregory Liberman  
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Region, Russia  
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##### **Ulyanovsk Hillel Mishpaha Gdola**

Director: Igor Dabakarov  
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432000 Russia  
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Fax: 7-8422 416287  
E-mail: mishpaha105@mail.ru

##### **Ulyanovsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Rabbi: rabbi Yosef Marozov  
Chairman: Mikhail Livshitz  
Deputy Chairman: Igor Dabakarov

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

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## **Ulyanovsk Jewish Welfare and Community Center (Hesed)**

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432000 Russia  
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*E-mail:* mishpaha105@mail.ru

## **Ulyanovsk Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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*Deputy Chairman:* Valery Ragatskin  
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432063 Russia  
*Phone:* 7-8422 416286,  
416287  
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### *VLADIMIR REGION*

## **Murom Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Yakov Sverdlov  
*Address:* Murom, Vladimir Region,  
Russia  
*E-mail:* murom@fjc.ru

## **Vladimir Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Lev Shamayev  
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Vladimir, Russia  
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335535  
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## **Vladimir Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* rabbi Arie-Leib Kogan  
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Vladimir, Russia  
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324454  
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## **Vladimir Jewish Community and Welfare Center «Hesed Ozer»**

*Chairman of Board:* Gregory Bakaleinik  
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Vladimir, Russia  
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324454  
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### *VOLGOGRAD REGION*

## **Jewish Community of Krasnoarmeisky district of Volgograd (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Victorina Antonova  
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## **Svetly Yar Jewish Community of Volgograd Region (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Aharon Gandelman  
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## **Volgograd Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Zalman Yoffe  
*Chairman:* Erlich Aronov  
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**Volgograd Jewish Day School  
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Volgograd, Russia  
Phone: 7-8442 732034,  
731101  
Web: www.oravner.com/volgograd

**Volgograd Jewish Welfare Center  
«Hesed Chaim»**

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400009 Russia  
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**Volgograd Municipal Jewish National  
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**Volgograd Regional Jewish National  
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**Volzhsky Jewish Community  
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Chairman: Garry Tarlovsky  
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**Volzhsky Jewish Community  
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**VOLOGDA REGION**

**Cherepovets Jewish Community  
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**Vologda Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**VORONEZH REGION**

**Voronezh Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

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Chairman: Stanislav Nezhelsky  
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# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Voronezh Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

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770744,  
770444,  
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## **Voronezh Jewish Community Center «Beit Mishpacha»**

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## **Voronezh Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Nechama»**

*Chairman of Board:* Leonid Zalan  
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394018 Russia  
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### YAROSLAVL REGION

## **Rybinsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Rybinsk Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Ahim»**

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*Director:* Lev Ref  
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## **Yaroslavl Jewish Community (Orthodox)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Volodarsky  
*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Yitzchak Lifshitz  
*Rabbi:* rabbi Moshe Murakhovsky  
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Yaroslavl, Russia  
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## **Yaroslavl Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Rachel»**

*Chairman of Board:* Yosef Boterashvili  
*Director:* Galina Karpman  
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## **Yaroslavl Regional Jewish National and Cultural Autonomy**

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### EVREYSKAYA AO

## **Birobidjan Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**Birobidjan Jewish Community  
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*Phone:* 7-4262 262340,  
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*KHANTY-MANSIYSKY AO*

**Surgut Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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*YAMALO-NENETSKY AO*

**Nadym Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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**SINGAPORE**

*COMMUNITY STRUCTURES*

**Chabad Center Singapore**

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*RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS*

**Chesed El Synagogue**

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synagogue.htm

**Maghain Aboth Synagogue**

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maghain\_synagogue.htm

**United Hebrew Congregation of  
Singapore**

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*EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS*

**Ganenu Jewish Learning  
Centre**

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238698

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+65 9673-9184 (mobile)

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**Talmud Torah Hebrew School**

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## OFFICIAL STRUCTURES OF ISRAEL

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info\_i@israelemb.org.sg

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## TAIWAN

### COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

#### Taiwan Jewish Community Centre

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### RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

#### Taiwan Community Centre Synagogue

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#### Taiwan Orthodox Synagogue

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## OFFICIAL STRUCTURES OF ISRAEL

### Economic and Cultural Representation

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## TAJKISTAN

### Tajikistan Jewish Community (Chabad)

Chairman: Valery Davydov  
Rabbi: rabbi Mikhail Abdurakhmanov

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Dushanbe 734001 Tajikistan

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212026,  
213164

E-mail: [dushanbe@fjc.ru](mailto:dushanbe@fjc.ru)

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## THAILAND

### COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

#### Chabad Center of Thailand

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**Chabad House of Chiang Mai**

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**Chabad of Chiang Mai**

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**Even Chen****Synagogue**

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**TURKEY***RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS***The Zulfaris Synagogue**

Address: Percemli Sokak, Karaky district, Istanbul

**Synagogue**

Address: Samanapazari Birlik Sok, 8, Ankara, Turkey

Phone: +90 (312) 311-6200

**Gerush Synagogue**

Address: Rurucesme Caddesi, in the old Jewish quarter

Phone: +90 (224) 316-8636,

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**Ahrida Synagogue**

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Phone: +90 (212) 243-5166,

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**Ashkenazi Congregation**

Address: 37 Yuksek Kaldirim Sok No 37, Galata, Istanbul, Turkey

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## **Bet Israel Synagogue (Sisli Synagogue)**

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## **Bet-Yaakov Synagogue**

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## **Burgazada Synagogue**

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## **Caddesbostan Synagogue**

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## **Etz Ahayim Synagogue**

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## **Hemadt Israel Synagogue**

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## **Hesed Le Avraam**

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## **Italian Congregation**

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## **Italian Synagogue Istanbul**

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## **Neve Shalom**

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## **Yenikoy Synagogue**

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### **Beth Israel Synagogue**

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## **TURKMENISTAN**

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## **UKRAINE**

### **All-Ukrainian Congress of Jewish Congregations**

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*Chief Rabbi of Ukraine and Kyiv:* rabbi

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### **Association of Jewish Organisations and Communities (Vaad) of Ukraine**

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### **Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine (Chabad)**

*President:* rabbi Meir Stambler

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## **Jewish Council of Ukraine**

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## **Jewish Foundation of Ukraine (JFU)**

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## **Religious Union of Progressive Judaism Communities of Ukraine (RUPJCU)**

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*President:* Alexander Zlotnik  
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**Ukrainian Jewish Committee**

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**Union of Jewish Religious  
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**United Jewish Community  
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**International Solomon University,  
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**Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI)  
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## **Kiev Chabad Community**

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## **Kiev Community of Progressive Judaism «Hatikva»**

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## **Kiev Jewish Community Center «Beiteynu»**

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## **Kyiv Kosher Restaurant «Haifa»**

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*Phone:* 380-44 417-2512

*Web:* www.kosher.ru/news/7/index.html

**Kyiv Jewish Community «Aish Hatorah»**

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**Kyiv Jewish Gymnasium № 299 «Orach Chaim»**

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**Kyiv Jewish kindergarten «Simcha Chabad»**

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*Phone:* 380-44 510-8255,  
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*Web:* www.simchaschool.kiev.ua

**Kyiv Jewish School № 325 «Simcha Chabad»**

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*Web:* www.simchaschool.kiev.ua

**Kyiv Jewish School and kindergarten «Perlina»**

*Address:* 24-A, Radyanska Ukraine Ave., Kyiv, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-44 434-8297

*Web:* www.detstvo.info/institution/childgarden/show\_inst/368.html

**Kyiv Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Nachalat Avot Azriel»**

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**Kyiv Kosher restaurant «King David»**

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**Kyiv ORT Lyceum**

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**Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies**

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## SEBASTOPOL

### **Sebastopol Community of Progressive Judaism**

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### **Sebastopol Hillel**

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### **Sebastopol Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## CRIMEA

### **Crimea Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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### **Evpatoria Jewish Community of Reform Judaism**

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### **Feodosia Jewish Community of Progressive Judaism «Or Sameach»**

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### **Kerch Community of Progressive Judaism «Gesher»**

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*Web:* [www.hesed-dorot.uch.net](http://www.hesed-dorot.uch.net)

### **Korsun-Shevchenkovsky Community of Progressive Judaism**

*Chairman:* Efim Diskin

*Address:* 37, Shevchenko Street, Korsun-  
Shevchenkovsky, Cherkassy Region  
19400 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-4735 20087

### **Korsun-Shevchenkovsky Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Naum Goroyzman

*Address:* 22, Shevchenko Street, Korsun-  
Shevchenkovsky, Cherkassy Region  
19400 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-4735 20504

### **Smela Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Peter Lozovatsky

*Address:* 3, Fruktovy Lane, Smela,  
Cherkassy Region, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-4733 43352,  
46165

### **Uman Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Kogos

*Address:* 20-10, Lenin Street, Uman,  
Cherkassy Region 20300 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-4744 52922,  
55149

### **Zvenigorodka Community of Progressive Judaism**

*Chairperson:* Voiletta Karpenko

*Address:* 21, Komintern Street,  
Zvenigorodka, Cherkassy Region,  
Ukraine

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

Phone: 380-4740 26485  
E-mail: opizven@ukr.net

## **Zvenigorodka Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Leonid Braslavsky  
Address: Zvenigorodka, Cherkassy  
Region, Ukraine  
Phone: 380-4740 52161  
E-mail: zvenigorodka@fjc.ru

### *CHERNOVTSY REGION*

## **Chernovtsy Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Shushana»**

Director: Leonid Fuks  
Address: 53, O. Kobylanska Street,  
Chernovtsy, Ukraine  
Phone: 380-372 552728  
Fax: 380-372 552728  
E-mail: hesed-shushana@mail.ru  
Web: www.shushana.h1.ru

## **Chernovtsy Community of progressive Judaism «Mishpakha»**

Chairperson: Polina Korenblum  
Address: 4/4, Skovoroda Street,  
Chernovtsy, Ukraine

## **Chernovtsy Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chief Rabbi: rabbi Menachem  
Glitzenshtein  
Address: 12, Raiz Street, Chernovtsy  
58000 Ukraine  
Phone: 380-372 585280  
Fax: 380-372 552728  
E-mail: chabadchernivtsy@walla.co.il  
Web: www.fjc.ru/chernovtzy

## **Chernovtsy Jewish Day School «Or Avner»**

Principal: rabbi Menachem  
Glitzenshtein

Address: 16, Shkolna Street, Chernovtsy  
58000 Ukraine  
Phone: 380-372 585280  
E-mail: or\_avner\_cv@mail.ru  
Web: www.fjc.ru/chernovtzy

## **Vizhnitza Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Alexander Tausher  
Address: 1, Russka Street, Vizhnitza,  
Chernovtsy Region 59200 Ukraine  
Phone: 380-3730 21759

### *CHERNIGOV REGION*

## **Chernigov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chief Rabbi: rabbi Yakov Muzykant  
Address: 58, Shchors Street, Chernigov  
14017 Ukraine  
Phone: 380-4622 71958  
Fax: 380-462 152831  
221155  
E-mail: sem@esther.chernigov.ua  
Web: www.fjc.ru/chernigov

## **Chernigov Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Esther»**

Address: 58, Schors Street, Chernigov  
14000 Ukraine  
Phone: 380-462 152831,  
152965,  
147610  
Fax: 380-462 152531  
E-mail: root@esther.chernigov.ua  
Web: esther.chernigov.ua

## **Priluki Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Pavel Lipin  
Address: 37-5, Pereyaslavka Street,  
Priluki, Chernigov Region 17500  
Ukraine  
Phone: 380-4637 52570  
Fax: 380-4637 53293

*DNEPROPETROVSK REGION*

**American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Representative office in Eastern Ukraine**

*Representative:* Amir Ben-Zvi  
*Address:* Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-562 324007,  
324008

*Fax:* 380-562 324009  
*E-mail:* joint@jdc.dp.ua  
*Web:* www.jdc.dp.ua

**Dneprodzerzhinsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Levi Stambler  
*Chairman:* Dovid Tarnopolsky  
*Address:* 15, Chervonogvardeyska Street, Dneprodzerzhinsk, Dnepropetrovsk Region 51925 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-569 535075  
*E-mail:* ddz@mail15.com

**Dnepropetrovsk Hillel**

*Director:* Olga Tovkach  
*Address:* 1-A, Klary Tzetkin Street, office 3, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-56 374-2158  
*E-mail:* tovkach2002@mail.ru

**Dnepropetrovsk Institute of Community and Welfare Workers (ICWW)**

*Address:* 88-A, Karl Marx Ave., Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-562 323988  
*Fax:* 380-562 340863  
*E-mail:* disr@a-teleport.com  
*Web:* web.alkar.net/disr

**Dnepropetrovsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*President:* Gennady Bogolyubov  
*Chief Rabbi:* Shmuel Kaminetsky

*Chairman:* Gregory Korol  
*Address:* 4, Sholom-Aleychem Street, Dnepropetrovsk 49000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-562 342120  
*Fax:* 380-562 342137  
*E-mail:* jewcom@a-teleport.com  
*Web:* www.djc.com.ua

**Dnepropetrovsk Jewish Day School (Chabad)**

*President:* rabbi Meir Ostrovsky  
*Principal:* Leonid Ganopolsky  
*Address:* 1, Minin Street, Dnepropetrovsk 49101 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-562 322717  
*Fax:* 380-562 322718  
*Web:* www.jewishschool.dp.ua

**Dnepropetrovsk Jewish Women's Teachers College «Beth Chana»**

*Principal:* Tamara Olshanitskaya  
*Address:* 11, Donetskoye Shosse, Dnepropetrovsk 49080 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-562 325575  
*Fax:* 380-562 475020

**Dnepropetrovsk Kosher cafe «At Mandie»**

*Manager:* Mendel Goldschmidt  
*Address:* 4, Sholom-Aleychem Street, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-562 342120

**Dnepropetrovsk Kosher store**

*Address:* 4, Sholom-Aleychem Street, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-56 744-8183

**Dnepropetrovsk ORT Technological Center**

*Director:* Dmitry Ivanov  
*Address:* 1, Minin Street, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

Phone: 380-562 360391  
Fax: 380-562 360392  
E-mail: office@ort.dp.ua  
Web: www.ort.dp.ua

## **Israeli Cultural Center in Dnepropetrovsk**

Director: Elena Karol  
Address: 98, Karl Marx Ave.,  
Dnepropetrovsk 49038 Ukraine  
Phone: 380-56 370-3205/07  
Fax: 380-56 370-3206  
E-mail: dnepro@il4u.org.il  
Web: www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/  
Dnepro/

## **Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in South- Eastern Ukraine**

Head of delegation: Reuven Grinberg  
Address: 2, Katerinoslavsky Blvd,  
Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine  
Phone: 380-56 770-2003,  
770-5450,  
770-5451,  
770-5452  
Fax: 380-56 770-5454,  
770-5455  
E-mail: dnepro@jafi.org  
Web: www.jafi.dp.ua

## **Krivoy Rog Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Rabbi: rabbi Liron Ederi  
Chairman: Alexander Uchitel  
Address: 25-A, Solnechny district, Kryviy  
Rih, Dnepropetrovsk Region 50056  
Ukraine  
Phone: 380-56 490-4552,  
490-4495,  
442-9552,  
442-9495  
E-mail: kobf@krogtv.net,

or\_avner@cabletv.dp.ua  
Web: www.krjew.com

**Krivoy Rog Jewish School «Or Avner»**  
Address: 48-A, Pushkin Street, Krivy Rih,  
Dnepropetrovsk Region, Ukraine  
Phone: 380-56 409-1247  
E-mail: school@krjew.com  
Web: www.krjew.com

## **Pavlograd Community of Progressive Judaism**

Chairman: Leonid Serdyukovsky  
Address: 31-5, Karl Marx Street,  
Pavlograd, Dnepropetrovsk Region  
51400 Ukraine  
Phone: 380-5632 61781

## **«The Tkuma» All-Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies**

Director: Igor Schupak  
Address: 15-B, Barikadna Street,  
Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine  
Phone: 380-56 744-0723  
Fax: 380-562 368711  
E-mail: tkuma@tkuma.dp.ua  
Web: www.tkuma.dp.ua

### *DONETSK REGION*

## **Artemovsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

Chairman: Ilya Krichevsky  
Address: 135-19, Petrovsky Street,  
Artemovsk, Donetsk Region 84500  
Ukraine  
Phone: 380-6274 49486

## **Donbass Regional Association of Jewish Congregations (Chabad)**

Chairman - Chief Rabbi of Donbass: rabbi  
Pinchas Vyshedsky  
Deputy Chairman: Yehuda Kelerman

*Address:* 36, Zhovtneva Street, Donetsk  
83086 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-62 334-3997,  
345-0051

*Fax:* 380-62 335-7725

**Donetsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi of Donbass:* Pinchas

Vyshedsky

*Chairman:* Yehuda Kelerman

*JCC Director:* Tamara Tseitlina

*Address:* 36, Zhovtneva Street, Donetsk  
83086 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-62 345-0052,  
345-0053,  
334-3997, 389-7061

*Fax:* 380-62 335-7725

*E-mail:* office@jewish-com.dn.ua

*Web:* www.jewish.donetsk.ua

**Donetsk Jewish Day School «Or  
Menachem» (Chabad)**

*Principal:* Elena Vyatkina

*Address:* 4, Darnitska Street, Donetsk,  
Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-62 223-5900

*Fax:* 380-62 382-9704

*Web:* www.oravner.com/ormendo

**Druzhkovka Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Director:* Kira Tolstosheyeva

*Address:* 20, Vavilov Street, Druzhkovka,  
Donetsk Region 84205 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-6267 44289

**Dzerzhinsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Dan Yakushin

*Address:* 3, Molodezhnaya Street,  
Novgorodskoye, Dzerzhinsk, Donetsk  
Region 85295 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-6247 40386

**Enakievo Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Khaikin

*Address:* 5-12, Peredovikov Street,  
Enakievo, Donetsk Region 86429  
Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-6252 51332

**Gorlovka Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Eduard Braslavsky

*Address:* 3, Lenin Sq., Gorlovka, Donetsk  
Region 84646 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-6242 28025

**Khartsyzsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Samuil Vaynshtein

*Address:* 3-23, Yubileyny m/r-n,  
Khartsyzsk, Donetsk Region 86700  
Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-50 183-6361

**Konstantinovka Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Boris Kozlov

*Address:* 18-7, Gorky Street,  
Konstantinovka, Donetsk Region 85114  
Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-6272 45157

**Kramatorsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Eduard Matveyev

*Address:* 60, Skadinov Street,  
Kramatorsk, Donetsk Region 84301  
Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-6264 31905

**Krasnoarmeysk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Semyon Svidler

*Address:* 10-19, Stepan Tomanov Street,

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

Krasnoarmeysk, Donetsk Region 85301  
Ukraine  
Phone: 380-6239 65679

## **Makeyevka Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Eliahu Kramer  
*Chairman:* Alexander Tishchenko  
*Address:* 57-16, Kirov Street, Makiivka,  
Donetsk Region 86101 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-6232 94070

## **Mariupol Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Menachem-Mendel Cohen  
*Chairman:* Moysey Kertser  
*Address:* 6, Kharlampievskaya Street, Mariupol,  
Donetsk Region 87515 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-629 412040,  
358043  
*Fax:* 380-629 412050  
*Web:* www.jewishmariupol.com

## **Shakhtersk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Director:* Raisa Zar  
*Address:* 17-75, 8th m/r-n, Shakhtersk,  
Donetsk Region 86200 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-6255 43799

## **Slavyansk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vladlen Lednyak  
*Address:* 10-85, Chubar Street,  
Slavyansk, Donetsk Region 84112  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-6262 28237

## **Torez Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Gregory Gorbach  
*Address:* 14-8, Gagarin Ave., Torez,  
Donetsk Region 86600 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-6254 34439

## *KHARKOV REGION*

### **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Representative office in North-Eastern Ukraine**

*Director:* Oksana Galkevich  
*Address:* 24, Chervonoshkolna  
Naberezhna, Kharkov, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 715-5199,  
703-2646,  
703-2647  
*Fax:* 380-57 733-0467  
*E-mail:* info@joint.kharkov.ua

### **International Solomon University, Eastern Ukrainian branch in Kharkov**

*Dean:* Boris Elkin  
*Address:* 22/26, Grazhdanskaya Street,  
Kharkov 61058 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 771-0253  
*Fax:* 380-57 771-0254  
*E-mail:* info@msu-kharkov.edu.ua  
*Web:* www.msu-kharkov.edu.ua

### **Israeli Cultural Center in Kharkov**

*Director:* Frida Gal  
*Address:* 10, Pravda Ave., Kharkov 61000  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 715-6601,  
717-5471  
*Fax:* 380-57 719-4998  
*E-mail:* harkovicc@il4u.org.il  
*Web:* www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/  
Harkov/

### **Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in Kharkov and Donetsk**

*Head of delegation:* Marina Ben-Arie  
*Address:* 32, Pushkinska Street, Kharkov  
61057 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 715-0835 /36,  
700-6992 (93, 95 96, 97,  
98, 99)

*Fax:* 380-57 714-2315  
*E-mail:* aliya-kharkov@sohnut.com  
*Web:* www.sohnut.kharkov.ua

### **Kharkov ORT Center**

*Director:* Konstantin Kravtsov  
*Address:* 2, Faninky Lane, Kharkov, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 702-4005  
*Fax:* 380-57 702-4072  
*E-mail:* info@ort.kharkov.ua

### **Kharkov Association of former Nazi Prisoners and Christian Righteous**

*Chairman of Board:* Elena Scherbova  
*Address:* 34, Chernyshevsky Street, Kharkov, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 714-3906,  
719-2106  
*Fax:* 380-57 714-3908

### **Kharkov Association of Jews – War Disables and Veterans**

*Chairman:* Solomon Svitsky  
*Address:* 34, Chernyshevsky Street, Kharkov, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 714-3906,  
719-2106

### **Kharkov Chabad Congregation**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Moshe Moskowitz  
*Chairman:* Alexander Kaganovsky  
*Address:* 12, Pushkinska Street, Kharkov 61057 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 731-1971/3526/6031  
*E-mail:* chabad@kharkov.com  
*Web:* www.synagogue.kharkov.ua

### **Kharkov Charitable Fund «To Holocaust Victims in Drobitskoy Yar»**

*President:* Stanislav Iscenko

*Address:* 5, Svoboda Sq., Kharkov 61022 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-57 718-8184,  
715-7440,  
372-7624

*Fax:* 380-57 731-2572  
*E-mail:* info@kholokostmemorial.org  
*Web:* www.kholokostmemorial.org

### **Kharkov Hillel**

*Director:* Yulia Pototskaya  
*Address:* 1, Constitution Sq., entrance 3, floor 2, office 32-01, Kharkov, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 7575-206  
*Fax:* 380-57 714-3974  
*E-mail:* hillelkharkov@mail.ru  
*Web:* picasaweb.google.com/kharkovhillel

### **Kharkov Holocaust Museum and Regional Committee «Drobitskoy Yar»**

*Chairman:* Leonid Leonidov  
*Director:* Larisa Volovik  
*Address:* 28, Petrovsky Street, Kharkov 61024 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 714-0719,  
700-4990,  
714-3906  
*Fax:* 380-57 714-0959  
*E-mail:* volovik@vlink.kharkov.ua  
*Web:* www.holocaustmuseum.pochta.org

### **Kharkov Jewish Community Center «Beit Dan»**

*Chairman of Board:* Boris Elkin  
*Director:* Zhanna Maistrenko  
*Address:* 2, Faninky Lane, Kharkov 61166 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 702-4976  
*Fax:* 380-57 702-4290  
*E-mail:* beitdan@ort.kharkov.ua  
*Web:* www.beitdan.org.ua

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Kharkov Jewish Congregation Orthodox Union**

*Chairman:* Dmitry Shuval  
*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Moshe Rosenbaum  
*Rabbi:* rabbi Shlomo Asraf  
*Address:* 45-3, Sumska Street, Kharkov  
61022 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 714-1854  
*Fax:* 380-57 714-0301  
*E-mail:* sumskaya@yahoo.com

## **Kharkov Jewish Cultural Center «Jewish Home»**

*Executive director:* Irina Chemerovskaya  
*Address:* 7, Skripnik Street, Kharkov,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 714-3679  
*E-mail:* chemer@vlink.kharkov.ua

## **Kharkov Jewish Day School «Shaalavim»**

*Principal:* Evgeny Persky  
*Address:* 152-B, Geroyev Stalingrada  
Ave, Kharkov 61096 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 297-5008  
*Fax:* 380-57 715-9204  
*E-mail:* uvk\_shaalavim@mail.ru

## **Kharkov Jewish Kindergarten № 140**

*Principal:* Miriam Moskowitz  
*Address:* 7/2, Otakar Yarosh Street,  
Kharkov, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 712-6526,  
332-1037

## **Kharkov Jewish School № 170**

*President:* rabbi Moshe Moskowitz  
*Principal:* Gregory Shoikhet  
*Address:* 11/13, Gastello Street, Kharkov,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 704-1191

*Fax:* 380-57 704-1192  
*E-mail:* sc170@sc170.kharkov.ua  
*Web:* www.sc170.kharkov.ua

## **Kharkov Jewish Welfare Fund «Hesed Shaare Tikva»**

*Chairman of Board:* Vadim Vishnevsky  
*Director:* Boris Murashkovsky  
*Address:* 82, Ak. Pavlov Street, Kharkov,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 760-1503,  
760-1567,  
760-1568

*Fax:* 380-57 760-1502  
*E-mail:* office@hesed.org.ua  
*Web:* www.hesed.org.ua

## **Kharkov Kosher restaurant Shalom**

*Address:* 19, Korolenka Lane, Kharkov,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 731-1132,  
731-1652  
*Web:* [http://www.debosh.net/  
news\\_2/110.php](http://www.debosh.net/news_2/110.php)

## **Kharkov Maccabi**

*President:* Leonid Fatalevich  
*Executive director:* Mark Belostotsky  
*Address:* 5-34, Gogol Street, Kharkov  
61057 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 392-3022

## **Kharkov Reform Congregation**

*Chairman:* Alexander Ioffe  
*Executive director:* Dmitry Baranov  
*Acting rabbi:* Mikhail Kapustin  
*Address:* 3-402, Novgorodskaya Street,  
Kharkov 61145 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 330-4255/7332  
*E-mail:* reformkharkiv@mail.ru,  
davidbar@mail.ru

**Kharkov United Jewish  
Community**

*President:* Alexander Feldman  
*Chairman of Board:* Gregory Shoikhet  
*Executive director:* Naum Volpe  
*Address:* 57, Poltavsky shlyakh Street,  
Kharkov 61001 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 712-0383/1753  
*Fax:* 380-57 777-0236  
*E-mail:* jewishkharkov@dial.com.ua  
*Web:* www.jewishkharkov.com

**The Tarbut Laam Eastern Ukraine  
Association, Kharkov**

*Chairman:* Gregory Dubovis  
*Address:* 5, Svoboda Sq., Kharkov 61022  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-57 705-1803,  
719-1497  
*E-mail:* bookra@kharkov.uktel.net

*HMELNITSKY REGION*

**Kamenets-Podolsky Jewish  
Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Moisey Lam  
*Address:* 32-93, Grushevsky Ave.,  
Kamenets-Podolsky, Hmelnytsky Region  
32300 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-3849 32500,  
34387

**Hmelnytsky Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Moshe Lerman  
*Address:* 58/1, Kaminetska Street,  
Hmelnytsky 29013 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-382 650159  
*Fax:* 380-382 652159

**Hmelnytsky Jewish Welfare Center  
«Hesed Besht»**

*Director:* Igor Ratushny  
*Address:* 40/2, Shevchenka Street,

Hmelnytsky 29000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-382 700954/5  
*Fax:* 380-382 720181  
*E-mail:* besht@utel.net.ua  
*Web:* www.besht.org.ua

*IVANO-FRANKOVSK REGION*

**Ivano-Frankovsk Jewish Welfare  
Center «Hesed Leib»**

*Address:* Ivano-Frankovsk, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-342 230600  
*Fax:* 380-342 522843  
*E-mail:* albert@il.if.ua

**Ivano-Frankovsk Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Moshe-Leib Kolwinski  
*Executive Director:* Igor Perelman  
*Address:* 7, Strachenyh Street, Ivano-  
Frankovsk 76018 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-342 775304  
*E-mail:* perelmani@mai.ru

*KHERSON REGION*

**Kherson Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Yosef-Yizchak Wolf  
*Address:* 27, Gorky Street, Kherson  
73025 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-552 264129  
*Fax:* 380-552 325367  
*E-mail:* chabad@selenia.net.ua

**Kherson Jewish Welfare and  
Community Center «Hesed Shmuel»**

*Director:* Alexander Vayner  
*Address:* 124, Chervonoflotska Street,  
Herson 73000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-552 425307,  
425306  
*Fax:* 380-552 425303  
*E-mail:* shmyel@tlc.kherson.ua  
*Web:* www.hesed.kherson.ua

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## *KIROVOGRAD REGION*

### **Kirovograd Community of Progressive Judaism «Hatikva»**

*Chairperson:* Emma Spektor  
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Kirovograd 25006 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-522 243231  
*Fax:* 380-522 320430  
*E-mail:* heshlomo@mail.ru

### **Kirovograd Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Dan Zakuta  
*Chairman:* A. Chervonenko  
*Address:* 43, Odeska Street, Kirovograd,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-522 321658  
*Fax:* 380-522 301445  
*E-mail:* zakuta@romb.net

## *KYIV REGION*

### **Bila Tserkva Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Meir Olsberg  
*Address:* 8, Gogol Street, Bila Tserkva,  
Kyiv Region 09100 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-4463 32960  
*E-mail:* chabad\_bel@magnus.kiev.ua

## *LUGANSK REGION*

### **Lugansk Jewish Community**

*Director:* Vadim Tabakin  
*Address:* 7-A, Khersonsky Tuoik Street,  
Lugansk, Ukraine

### **Lugansk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Sholom Gopin  
*Chairman:* Vladimir Selyubsky  
*Address:* 7-A, Khersonsky Tupik Street,  
Lugansk 91053 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-642 501336,  
536552

*E-mail:* office@chabad.lg.ua  
*Web:* www.fjc.ru/lugansk

### **Lugansk Jewish Day School «Beit Menachem – Or Avner Chabad»**

*Principal:* Larisa Gritsenko  
*Address:* 1, Parizhskoy Kommunny Street,  
Lugansk 91000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-642 621390  
*Web:* www.fjc.ru/lugansk

### **Lugansk Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Ner»**

*Address:* 7-A, Khersonsky Tupik Street,  
Lugansk 91053 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-642 531332,  
501057  
*Fax:* 380-642 501058  
*E-mail:* office@hesed-ner.lg.ua

## *LVOV REGION*

### **Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in Western Ukraine**

*Address:* Lvov, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-322 970616  
*Fax:* 380-322 971065  
*E-mail:* sohnut.lviv@utel.net.ua

### **Lvov Gymnasium «Acheinu Lauder»**

*Principal:* Sara Bald  
*Address:* 12, Dovzhenka Street, Lvov  
79066 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-32 227-6475,  
227-6478  
*Fax:* 380-32 227-4903

### **Lvov Hillel**

*Director:* Elena Andronati  
*Address:* 15-46, Vygovsky Street, Lvov  
79054 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-322 965309

**Lvov Jewish Restaurant «Galician Jewish knajpa»**

*Director:* Yuriy Nazaruk

*Address:* 39, Staroevreyska Street, Lvov, Ukraine

*Web:* cabare.co.ua/page/lvovskij-restoran-galicka-zhidivska-knajpa

**Lvov Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed ArieH»**

*Director:* Adel Dianova

*Address:* 30, Kotlyarevsky Street, Lvov 79013 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-32 238-9860

*Fax:* 380-32 238-9869,  
238-9915,  
238-1178

*E-mail:* arie@hesed.lviv.ua

*Web:* www.hesed.lviv.ua

**Lvov Community of Progressive Judaism «Ture Zahav»**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Goldman

*Address:* 29/1-A, Ivan Federov Street, Lvov, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-322 971271

*E-mail:* turezagav@yahoo.com

*NIKOLAEV REGION*

**Krivoe Ozero Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Alexander Anchipolovsky

*Address:* 90, Lenin Street, Krivoye Ozero, Nikolaev Region, Ukraine

**Nikolaev Community of Progressive Judaism**

*Chairman:* Yuri Grossman

*Address:* Nikolaev, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-512 353969

**Nikolaev Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Sholom Gottlib

*Address:* 15, Karl Liebknecht Street, Nikolaev 54001 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-512 355539,  
351139,  
353072

*Fax:* 380-512 580536

*E-mail:* shalom@gottlib.mk.ua

*Web:* www.mkjcc.org.ua

**Nikolaev Jewish Day School «Or Menachem»**

*Principal:* Marina Kislovska

*Address:* 110/1, Chkalov Street, Nikolaev, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-512 554336,  
554337

*Fax:* 380-512 580536

**Nikolaev Society of Jewish Culture**

*Chairman:* Mikhail Goldenberg

*Address:* 23/1, Navarinska Street, Nikolaev 54001 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-512 470395

*E-mail:* noek@comcent.mk.ua

*Web:* www.jewish.mk.ua

**Ochakov Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Efim Tvardovsky

*Address:* Ochakov, Nikolaev Region, Ukraine

**Pervomaysk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Levi-Yitzchok Perlstein

*Chairman:* Mikhail Shefkin

*Address:* 28, Grushevsky Street, Pervomaysk, Nikolaev Region 55200 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-5161 44770

*E-mail:* levip@walla.co.il

*Web:* www.fjc.ru/pervomaisk

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## ODESSA REGION

### **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), Representative office in Southern Ukraine**

*Country director:* Yizchak Averbuch  
*Director:* Igor Patlazhan  
*Address:* Odessa, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380 48 728-7039  
*E-mail:* joint@joint.odessa.ua

### **Israeli Cultural Center in Odessa**

*Director:* Shlomo Ben-Zvi  
*Address:* 11, Paster Street, Odessa 65026  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 723-4411,  
723-1307,  
723-6106  
*Fax:* 380-48 723-0205  
*E-mail:* odessaicc@il4u.org.il  
*Web:* www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/  
Odessa/

### **Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), Representative office in Southern Ukraine**

*Head of delegation:* Yafik Zarka  
*Address:* 17, B. Arnautska Street, Odessa,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 786-9016,  
786-9017  
*Fax:* 380-48 786-0800  
*E-mail:* aliya@te.net.ua

### **Odessa Hillel**

*Director:* Pavel Vugelman  
*Address:* 4-1, Schepkin Street, Odessa,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 723-8464  
*E-mail:* odessa.hillel@gmail.com  
*Web:* www.hillel.org.ua

### **Odessa Community of Progressive Judaism «Emanu-El»**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Aerov  
*Address:* 7-672, Grecheska Street,  
Odessa, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-482 251400  
*E-mail:* reform\_odessa@rambler.ru

### **Odessa JCC «Migdal»**

*Director:* Kira Verkhovskaya  
*Address:* 46-A, M.Arnautska Street,  
Odessa, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 777-0718  
*Fax:* 380-482 343968  
*E-mail:* migdal@tm.odessa.ua  
*Web:* www.migdal.ru

### **Odessa JCC «Moria»**

*Director:* Gennady Katsen  
*Address:* 5-A, Pionerska Street, Odessa  
65009 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-482 370445  
*Fax:* 380-482 635404  
*E-mail:* moria@farlep.net  
*Web:* www.moria.farlep.net

### **Odessa Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Avrom Wolf  
*Address:* 21, Osipov Street, Odessa  
65011 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 728-0770  
*Fax:* 380-482 496301  
*E-mail:* secretary@shomrei.farlep.net

### **Odessa Jewish kindergarten «Tikva Or Sameach»**

*Principal:* Dora Gen  
*Address:* 25, Evreyska Street, Odessa  
65045 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-482 347850  
*E-mail:* tikvaodessa@ukr.net  
*Web:* www.tikva.odessa.ua/?detsad

**Odessa Jewish Museum**

*Director:* Mikhail Rashkovetsky  
*Address:* 66, Nizhinska Street, Odessa,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 728-9743  
*E-mail:* museum@migdal.ru  
*Web:* www.migdal.ru/migdal/museum/

**Odessa Jewish Orphanage «Tikva»**

*Principal:* Refael Kruskal  
*Address:* 25, Evreyska Street, Odessa  
65045 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 234-7850  
*E-mail:* orphans@te.net.ua  
*Web:* www.tikvaodessa.org

**Odessa Jewish Orthodox Community  
«Ohr Sameach»**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Shlomo Baksht  
*Chairman:* Yakov Kroytoru  
*Address:* 25, Evreyska Street, Odessa  
65045 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-482 347850  
*E-mail:* tikvaodessa@ukr.net  
*Web:* www.tikva.odessa.ua

**Odessa Jewish School № 94**

*Principal:* Svetlana Manchenko  
*Address:* 60, Marazlievska Street, Odessa  
65014 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 728-7864  
*Fax:* 380-48 728-7864  
*Web:* [http://www.chinuchfsu.com/  
page\\_pid\\_394.aspx](http://www.chinuchfsu.com/page_pid_394.aspx)

**Odessa Jewish School «Chabad Or  
Avner»**

*Principal:* Yakov Shostak  
*Address:* 7/9, Pirogovskaya Street,  
Odessa, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 728-0770  
*Web:* [www.chinuchfsu.com/page\\_  
pid\\_437.aspx](http://www.chinuchfsu.com/page_pid_437.aspx)

**Odessa Jewish School**

**«Ohr Sameach»**  
*Principal:* Mark Dreerman  
*Address:* 5/7, Kartamyshevsky Lane,  
Odessa 65091 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 777-15-64,  
731-1067  
*E-mail:* tikvaodessa@ukr.net  
*Web:* www.tikva.odessa.ua/?schools

**Odessa Jewish University**

*Rector:* Mark Dreerman  
*Address:* 25, Evreyska Street, Odessa  
65045 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 777-1564  
*E-mail:* tikvaodessa@ukr.net  
*Web:* www.tikva.odessa.ua/?schools

**Odessa Jewish University  
(Chabad)**

*Rector:* Evgeny Borenshtein  
*Address:* 21, Osipov Street, Odessa  
65011 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 728-0770

**Odessa Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed  
Shaarey Zion»**

*Director:* Anatoly Keselman  
*Address:* Odessa, Ukraine  
*Web:* [www.gmilushesed.narod.ru](http://www.gmilushesed.narod.ru)

**Odessa Kosher Cafe «Netaniya»**

*Address:* 23, Rishelievskaya Street, Odessa,  
Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-48 724-2372  
*Web:* www.tikva.odessa.ua/?netanya

**Odessa Kosher restaurant «Rozmarin»**

*Director:* Vladimir Itkin  
*Address:* 46-A, Malaya Arnavutskaya  
Street, Odessa, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-482 344644,  
347311

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

## **Odessa Kosher restaurant**

«Hevron»

*Address:* 30, Rishelyovska Street, Odessa, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-48 715-0374

*Web:* [www.tikva.odessa.ua/?hevron](http://www.tikva.odessa.ua/?hevron)

### *POLTAVA REGION*

## **Kremenchug Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Shlomo Salamon

*Chairman:* Valery Degot

*Address:* 3-A, Kvartalna Street, Kremenchuk, Poltava Region 39614 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-536 793471/72

*Fax:* 380-536 793470

*E-mail:* [shlomo@vicard.net](mailto:shlomo@vicard.net),

[jewkrem@vicard.net](mailto:jewkrem@vicard.net)

*Web:* [www.jewish.kremenchug.net](http://www.jewish.kremenchug.net)

## **Poltava Community of Progressive Judaism «Beth Am»**

*Chairperson:* Alla Magas

*Address:* 13-507, Lenin Street, Poltava 36000 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-532 610585

*E-mail:* [beth\\_am@ukr.net](mailto:beth_am@ukr.net),  
[beth\\_am@yahoo.com](mailto:beth_am@yahoo.com),  
[magas\\_alla@mail.ru](mailto:magas_alla@mail.ru)

## **Poltava Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi of Poltava Region:* rabbi Yosef Segal

*Chairman:* Leonid Sukhar

*Address:* 10/24, Gogol Street, Poltava 36020 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-532 508305,  
508250

*Fax:* 38-0532 508670

*E-mail:* [poltava@oravner.ru](mailto:poltava@oravner.ru)

*Web:* [www.fjc.ru/poltava](http://www.fjc.ru/poltava)

## **Poltava Jewish Day School «Or Avner»**

*Principal:* Olga Obogrelova

*Address:* 9, Khotkevich Street, Poltava, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-532 599751

*E-mail:* [poltava@oravner.ru](mailto:poltava@oravner.ru)

*Web:* [www.fjc.ru/poltava](http://www.fjc.ru/poltava)

### *ROVNO REGION*

## **Rovno Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* Shneur-Zalman Shneersohn

*Address:* 39, Shkolna Street, Rovno 33033 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-50 313-6901

*Web:* [www.fjc.ru/rovno](http://www.fjc.ru/rovno)

## **Rovno Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Osher»**

*Address:* Rovno, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-362 223106

*Fax:* 380-362 240469

*E-mail:* [osher@ukrwest.net](mailto:osher@ukrwest.net)

### *SUMY REGION*

## **Konotop Community of Progressive Judaism**

*Chairman:* Ruvim Bomshtein

*Address:* 53, Soborna Street, Konotop, Sumy Region, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-5447 71044

*Fax:* 380-5447 71361

*E-mail:* [mila@ester.org.ua](mailto:mila@ester.org.ua)

## **Konotop Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Arkady Konyavsky

*Address:* 33, Shevchenka Street, Konotop, Sumy Region 41615 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-5447 41361

## **Konotop Jewish Welfare and Community Center «Hesed Esther»**

*Address:* 33, Shevchenka Street,

Konotop, Sumy Region 41615 Ukraine  
*E-mail:* ester@ester.org.ua  
*Web:* www.ester.org.ua

**Sumy Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Yechiel-Shlomo  
Levitansky  
*Chairman:* Alexander Goron  
*Address:* 17, Kooperativna Street, Sumy  
40001 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-542 211377,  
371689  
*Web:* www.fjc.ru/sumy

**Sumy Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed  
Haim»**

*Address:* Sumy, Ukraine  
*Web:* www.jewish.sumy.ua

*TERNOPOL REGION*

**Ternopol Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* David Fainshtein  
*Address:* 14-26, Dmitro Galitsky Bld.,  
Ternopol 46000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-352 226324  
*Fax:* 380-3522 15424

*TRANS-CARPATIAN REGION*

**Berehovo Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Ernst Goldberger  
*Address:* 13, Rozoshkert Street,  
Berehovo, Carpaty Region, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-50 540-7665

**Hust Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Vladimir Kats  
*Address:* 11, Nezalezhnist Sq., Hust,  
Carpaty Region, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-66 778-5786

**Mukachevo Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Avraham Leibovich  
*Address:* 8, Grushevsky Street,  
Mukachevo, Carpaty Region, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-50 591-1596

**Transcarpatian Jewish  
Welfare Center**

**«Hesed Shpira»**  
*Director:* Mikhail Galin  
*Address:* 8, Podgorna Street, Uzhgorod  
88000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-312 612033,  
619201  
*Fax:* 380-312 612435  
*E-mail:* fond@hesed-shpira.com.ua  
*Web:* www.hesed-shpira.com.ua

**Uzhgorod Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Menachem Mendel  
Taichman  
*Chairman:* Moshe Moshkovich  
*Address:* 36, Ruska Street, Uzhgorod  
88000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-312 612072,  
226588  
*E-mail:* ungvar770@gmail.com  
*Web:* www.jewish-karpaty.in.ua

**Vinogradovo Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Nikolay Weiss  
*Address:* 32, Krupskaya Street, Vilok  
village, Carpaty Region, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-97 226-2469

*VINNITSA REGION*

**Gnivan Community of Progressive  
Judaism**

*Chairman:* Boris Nebrat  
*Address:* 90, Lenin Street, Gnivan,

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

Vinnitsa Region 23310 Ukraine  
Phone: 380-4355 33475

## **Khmelnik Community of Liberal Judaism**

*Chairperson:* Maria Koltonyuk  
*Address:* 9-48, 1st Traven Street,  
Khmelnik, Vinnitsa Region, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-4338 20632

## **Tulchin Community of Progressive Judaism**

*Chairman:* Sofia Golfeld  
*Address:* 106-1, Lenin Street, Tulchin,  
Vinnitsa Region 23600 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-4335 23572

## **Vinnitsa Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi of Vinnitsa region:* rabbi  
Shaul Horowitz  
*Address:* 202, Mayakovsky Street,  
Vinnitsa 21000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-432 523374,  
226483  
*Fax:* 380-432 610611  
*E-mail:* chabvini@apexnet.com.ua  
*Web:* www.vinnitsa.com/vinjew/  
www.fjc.ru/vinnitza

## **Vinnitsa Jewish Community Center «Mishpaha»**

*Chairman:* Evgen Zilbert  
*Address:* 8, Kosmonavtov Street,  
Vinnitsa, Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-432 446015  
*Fax:* 380-432 468339  
*E-mail:* mishpakha@vinnitsa.com  
*Web:* www.jewish.vinnitsa.com

## **Vinnitsa Jewish Community of Progressive Judaism**

*Chairman:* Igor Kudryavtsev

*Address:* 8, Kosmonavtov Street, Vinnitsa  
21021 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-432 523374  
*E-mail:* kie@utel.net.ua

## **Vinnitsa Jewish Welfare Center «Hesed Emuna»**

*Address:* 8, Kosmonavtov Street, Vinnitsa  
21021 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-432 446015  
*Fax:* 380-432 431134  
*E-mail:* office@hesed.vn.ua  
*Web:* www.jewish.vinnitsa.com

### VOHLYN REGION

## **Lutsk Jewish Community (Chabad)**

*Chairman:* Ashortia Murabi  
*Address:* 25A-35, Sobornosti Ave., Lutsk  
43000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-67 788-6835  
*Fax:* 380-332 228000

## **Vohlyn Community of Progressive Judaism**

*Chairman:* Eduard Dolinsky  
*Executive director:* Valentyn Gnatyuk  
*Address:* 6, Bogdan Khmel'nitsky Street,  
Lutsk 43000 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-332 723926  
*Fax:* 380-332 724817  
*E-mail:* v75@itt.net.ua

### ZAPOROZHYYE REGION

## **Zaporozhye Community of Progressive Judaism «Shalom»**

*Chairman:* Dmitro Metilka  
*Address:* 9-31, Lermontov Street,  
Zaporozhye 69095 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-61 262-3641  
*Fax:* 380-61 224-0797  
*E-mail:* shalom\_2001@mail.ru,  
metilka@mail.ru

**Zaporozhye Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi:* rabbi Nachum Erentreu

*Chairman:* David Siritsky

*Address:* 22, Turgenev Street,

Zaporozhye 69063 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-61 263-0612,

264-2961,

264-4428,

289-8094

*Fax:* 380-61 212-7040

*E-mail:* nachum@zp.ukrtel.net

*Web:* www.fjc.ru/zaporozhye

**Zaporozhye Jewish Day School «Or  
Avner Chabad»**

*Principal:* Konstantin Dubov

*Address:* 9-A, Borodinska Street,

Zaporozhye 69096 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-61 289-2914,

259-1324

*Fax:* 380-61 212-7040

*Web:* www.toda.zp.ua/index.  
php?Lev=chabad

**Zaporozhye Jewish Gymnasium  
«Alef»**

*Principal:* Dolina Shalmina

*Address:* 14, Mayakovsky Street,

Zaporozhye, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-61 234-0533

*Fax:* 380-61 222-0630

*Web:* www.toda.zp.ua/index.  
php?Lev=alef

**Zaporozhye Jewish  
Welfare and Community Center  
«Mazal Tov»**

*Director:* Inessa Nosenko

*Address:* 4, Peremoha Street,

Zaporozhye, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-61 213-5672

*Fax:* 380-61 213-8090

*E-mail:* mazal@mazal.zssm.zp.ua

*Web:* www.toda.zp.ua/index.php?Lev=  
mazaltov

**Zaporozhye Jewish  
Welfare Center «Hesed Michael»**

*Director:* Anatoly Shveld

*Address:* 4, Peremoha Street,

Zaporozhye, Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-61 213-5750

**ZHYTOMIR REGION**

**Berdichev Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Moshe Taller

*Chairman:* Arkady Gleizer

*Address:* 3, Chornovil Street, Berdichev,

Zhytomir Region 13300 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-4143 20235

*Fax:* 380-4143 21289

*E-mail:* eberdichev@gmail.com

**Korosten Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Rabbi:* rabbi Aharon Berger

*Chairman:* Ilya Korysny

*Address:* 30, Pionerska Street, Korosten,

Zhytomir Region 11500 Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-4142 47909,

47910

*E-mail:* irg@kor.zt.ukrtel.net

**Zhytomir Community  
of Progressive Judaism**

«Shtern»

*Chairman:* Mikhail Gurvitz

*Address:* 57-59, Kyivska Street, Zhytomir,  
Ukraine

*Phone:* 380-412 376494

**Zhytomir Jewish Community  
(Chabad)**

*Chief Rabbi of Central and Western*

# THE REFERENCE BOOK OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

*Ukraine:* rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm  
*Chairman:* Vladimir Rozengurten (1911-2007)  
*Executive Director:* rabbi Nochum Tamarin  
*Address:* 9, Mala Berdichevska Street, Zhytomir 10014 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-412 420744  
*Fax:* 380-412 222717  
*E-mail:* office@fjczt.org  
*Web:* www.fjczt.org

**Zhytomir Jewish  
Gymnasium «Yaldei Menachem  
Or Avner»**  
*Principal:* Anna Demidetska  
*Address:* 57, Chekhov Street, Zhytomir 10014 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-412 251792  
*Fax:* 380-412 253893  
*Web:* www.chinuchfsu.com/page\_pid\_450.aspx

**Zhytomir Jewish  
Welfare Center  
«Hesed Shlomo»**  
*Executive Director:* Sofia Zaytseva  
*Address:* 10, Yan Gamarnik Street, Zhytomir 10003 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-412 426197/8  
*Fax:* 380-412 426201  
*E-mail:* hesed@ukrpost.ua  
*Web:* www.hesedshlomo.com.ua

**Zhytomir Machon  
«Chaya Mushka»**  
*Principal:* Braha Tamarin  
*Address:* 84, Starochudnovskaya Street, Zhytomir 10014 Ukraine  
*Phone:* 380-50 463-1295  
*Fax:* 380-412 420744  
*Web:* www.fjc.ru/zhitomir

## UZBEKISTAN

**American Jewish Joint Distributive  
Committee (AJJDC), Representative  
office in Republic of Uzbekistan**  
*Representative:* Max Wiesel  
*Office Director:* Boris Nedosekov  
*Address:* Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
*Phone:* 998-71 140-0616  
*Fax:* 998-71 140-0666  
*E-mail:* jdctashkent@uzpak.uz

**Association of Jewish Communities of  
Uzbekistan (Chabad)**  
*Address:* 30, Shokhzhakhon Tor Street, Tashkent 100100 Uzbekistan  
*Phone:* 998-71 152-5978,  
253-9640  
*Fax:* 998-71 120-6431  
*E-mail:* jewish@jewish.uz  
*Web:* www.jewish.uz

**Embassy of the State of Israel in  
Uzbekistan**  
*Ambassador:* Hillel Newman  
*Address:* 3, Abdulla Qahhar Street, Tashkent 100100 Uzbekistan  
*Phone:* 998-71 120-5808/09/10/11  
*Fax:* 998-71 120-5812,  
120-5994  
*E-mail:* ambassador-sec@tashkent.mfa.gov.il  
*Web:* tashkent.mfa.gov.il

**Israeli Cultural Center in Tashkent**  
*Director:* Julia Naiman  
*Address:* 18, Mariam Yakubova Street, Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
*Phone:* 998-71 120-5801/02  
*Fax:* 998-71 120-5803  
*E-mail:* tashkenticc@il4u.org.il  
*Web:* www.il4u.org.il/Keren/Centers/Tashkent/

**Jewish Agency for Israel,  
Representative office in Republic of  
Uzbekistan**

*Head of delegation:* Asher Uliamperl  
*Address:* 56/58, Zarbog Street, Tashkent,  
Uzbekistan  
*Phone:* 998-71 152-3833  
*Fax:* 998-71 152-3864  
*E-mail:* asheru@jafi.org  
*Web:* www.jafi.uz

**Uzbekistan Jewish National and  
Cultural Center**

*Chairman:* Victor Mikhailov  
*Address:* 4, Bobur Street, Tashkent  
100066 Uzbekistan  
*Phone:* 998-712 545876

*TASHKENT*

**Bukharian Jewish Cultural Center  
«Simcho»**

*Chairperson:* Tamara Akilova  
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## **Bukhara Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Fergana Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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## **Bukhara Jewish Family Center**

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## **Margilan Jewish Community (Chabad)**

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