



International academic conference

## **YIVO in Vilna: Institution, Personalities, and Legacy**

Dedicated to the 90th Anniversary of YIVO's Establishment and the 75th Anniversary of its  
Transition to New York

21-23th April 2015, Vilnius

In spring 1925 the institution known as the *Yidisher visnshaftlekher institut (YIVO)* was established in Vilna. It became one of the most famous research centers of East European Jewish culture, history, linguistics and literature, gathering and preserving the heritage of the Yiddish language. During the Second World War the YIVO headquarters was transferred to New York, where it continues its work today; yet part of the heritage that YIVO managed to collect was preserved in Vilna. In the context of today's Vilnius the symbolic meaning of YIVO – one of the famous icons of the Jewish community's past – remains. YIVO in New York continued the work of the institution, its academic tradition and spirit while adapting to the post-war environment in New York.

The conference's focus will be the Vilna period of YIVO's activities and its intellectual, social, and cultural contexts, as well as the institute's transition to New York. It will also consider the relevance of YIVO's work to today's academic research in and institutional structure for the study of East European Jewry. Finally, the conference invites discussion of the impact of YIVO not only on scholarship but also on the identity of the local Jewish community, analyzing the creation of the institute's self-image and Vilna's place in it.

The conference seeks to discuss the following questions:

1. YIVO's activities and main achievements in the interwar period;
2. YIVO's relationship with other Jewish cultural and educational institutions in interwar Vilna, in particular the Yiddish secular schools.

3. The methodology and organization of YIVO's scholarly work, their impact on Jewish studies in pre-war Eastern Europe, and their relevance today.
4. The role of YIVO in formulating Vilna's identity as a centre of modern Jewish culture and Vilna's importance to the self-image of YIVO.
5. YIVO's relationship with other academic institutions in Vilna and with contemporaneous centers for Jewish studies throughout the world.
6. YIVO as a transnational organization with a worldwide network of branches and donors; contacts between YIVO in Vilna and its branches, most notably in New York, in the pre-war period
7. YIVO's transition to New York and the legacy of Vilna in its post-war work.
8. YIVO during Soviet Years (1940-1941) and World War II;
9. Fate of YIVO people and books

To submit a proposal, please send a title and description of your proposed presentation of no more than one page together with a brief CV to: [info@jewishstudies.lt](mailto:info@jewishstudies.lt). The deadline for proposals is: the 1 of October of 2014. For more information, please contact: [info@jewishstudies.lt](mailto:info@jewishstudies.lt).

Some support for travel and housing expenses will be available, pending confirmation of funding.

A program of events celebrating YIVO's 90th anniversary, with a focus on its post-war history in the United States, will take place at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York in May 2015.

**Organizers:**

Centre for Studies of the Culture and History of East European Jews

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

Vilnius University, Faculty of History

Lithuanian Institute of History

Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore