

The Creation of a Documentary Collection on the History of Russian Jewry at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People

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SUMMARY. At the beginning of the 1990s the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (Jerusalem) initiated a project to survey and microfilm sources in archives throughout the former Soviet Union. The project's aim is to create at the Central Archives a collection of archival sources on the history of Russian Jewry. The article opens with a brief description of survey activities in German and Russian archives, which preceded and inspired similar activities by the Central Archives in government archives throughout the world. It continues with a detailed description of the Central Archives' activities in government archives throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States. The Central Archives have created a database of inventories from numerous archives in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Moldova, and the Baltic States, as well as a massive collection of micro-

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Transliterations of place names appearing in this article are based on their Russian spellings.

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films relating to Jews in these areas from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, on a wide range of subjects. The Central Archives plan to broaden the geographic range of surveys and microfilms, as well as publish selections of the sources uncovered. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2003 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Since the beginning of the 1990s the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) have been leading a broad-ranging project to uncover primary source materials on the history of Jews in archives in the former Soviet Union, and copy them. The goal of this article is to acquaint the reader with the project's background, its contents, current results, and future prospects.¹

The opportunity for Israeli archivists to conduct research using Soviet archival collections arose as a result of *perestroika* (rebuilding) in the mid-1980s. For the first time in half a century, the doors to many archives were opened somewhat to researchers of Jewish history. By the start of the 1990s, the so-called "Jewish"² collections, "imprisoned" for decades in "special storage," were for the most part "liberated." This took place within the context of the fall of the USSR and the formation of independent national governments with their own archival systems. With a general tendency towards liberalization, the archival politics of each government depended on political twists and turns, as well as on the archives' administrators and their particular policies.

Perestroika also stimulated a rise in the national identity of Soviet Jews. Novice researchers of the cultural and historical past turned to government archives. At last, after many years, their collective efforts drew a source of study on Russian Jewish history out of prolonged stagnation. The opening up of "new" documentary resources, descriptions of archival collections, and inventories of Jewish archival collections have been published in academic journals and put forth in individual publications over the last ten to fifteen years.³

The many Western researchers and research institutions participating in the development of former Soviet archives have stimulated the overall process: they attract local researchers and archival employees to their projects, and they open the pages of academic journals to archival publications.⁴ Israeli archives and research institutes are also conducting searches and copying sources on Jews in Russia and the Soviet Union as they pertain to their research topics. In contrast, CAHJP does not limit its work to developing archival collections, either in terms of territory, topic, or chronology.

THE CREATION OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL ARCHIVES IN JERUSALEM

The Jewish Historical General Archives were established over sixty years ago in Jerusalem. It was the realization of the plans of Ben-Zion Dinaburg (Dinur), the representative of the Historical and Ethnographical Society of Israel (subsequently the Israeli minister of education), and Josef Meisl, a Jewish historian, and former secretary and librarian of the Berlin Jewish community.

With the rise of Nazism in Europe, many Jewish historians realized the urgent need to save the archives of Jewish communities and to concentrate them in a national archive in Israel. Founded in the end of the 1930s at the initiative of Meisl and his associates, the Jewish Historical General Archives were taken under the auspices of the Society of History and Ethnography in 1944. A quarter of a century later (1969) it became an independent institution—the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People.⁵

“The archive’s goal,” as stated by its first director, Meisl (1947), “is to collect and prepare for scholarly use sources on the history of our people in all the countries of the Diaspora. We want to build a storage place for documents found both in our country and in the Diaspora, on the history of our people, its suffering and accomplishments in all countries of the world in the course of the whole history of its existence.”⁶ For Meisl, a graduate of a German-Jewish archeographical school, it became obvious that searches of archival material would be concentrated for the most part in government archives of the Diaspora. Moreover, as a result of the Holocaust, the archives of many European Jewish communities were lost.

The idea of an independent document collection in government archives to ensure full-fledged research on Jewish history was first stated publicly by the German Jewish historian Eugen Täubler, the founder (1906) and first director of the General Archives of German Jewry. Determining the task of filling the gaps in documentation of Jewish communities in Germany, Täubler attached

special significance to research in government, municipal, and church archives, and also the family archives of local aristocracy. These materials related to Jewish life, and were wider in chronological reach, and topically much more diverse than the community documentation.⁷

Meisl, his colleagues and successors naturally adopted this methodology. It was not by accident that Daniel Cohen, the director of the CAHJP from 1957 to 1983, reporting at the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies (1981) on the Archives' thirty years of work in European government archives, emphasized that it was originally Täubler's idea.⁸

Ben-Zion Dinur, chairman of the board of the CAHJP until his death (1973), also shared the archeographic ideas of Täubler, his teacher in the Berlin Hochschule of Jewish Studies (1911) and a good friend for many years. However, in his experience with Russian Jewish historiography, Dinur also became familiar with the need to use documentation from government archives for Jewish historical research.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHIVES
IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS
BY HISTORIANS OF RUSSIAN JEWRY**

Semyon Dubnov (Simon Dubnow) first addressed the significance of materials in government archives in the program for collecting Jewish manuscripts—and their importance for Jewish historical research in Russia—in the journal *Voskhod*, in 1891. As an example, he cited the painstaking archeographic work on court books of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries by the historian Sergei Bershadskii, who was the first to state “that in order to construct an edifice of Jewish history in Russia it is necessary to establish a broad foundation of facts.”⁹ Dubnov's program received a great response among young Jewish intellectuals. Numerous helpers sent him originals and copies of documents, including those from local government archives. In St. Petersburg, in 1892, a group of young Jewish lawyers organized the Jewish Historical-Ethnographical Commission. Due to the unavailability of government archives for Jewish researchers, they took to registering published documents pertaining to the history of Russian Jewry and creating a collection of registries.¹⁰

Iulii Gessen, a bank clerk and amateur writer, became the first Jewish researcher to receive access to the archives of the higher and central Russian administrations (1901). He familiarized himself with all of the details of documents from the various departments of the Government Council, Senate, Jewish Committee (1840-1865), and various ministries: Internal Affairs, Jus-

tice, Public Education, Finance, Agriculture, and the Military Main Headquarter Archive. Gessen used “the richest material for the history of Russian Jews” in his articles and principal work, *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda v Rossii* (The History of the Jewish People in Russia).¹¹

The February Revolution of 1917 finally granted Jewish historians the right to work in the archives of the Tsarist government. The Bolshevik government, which came to power in October, at first actually encouraged archival research in Jewish studies. In Petrograd, three Jewish archival commissions were formed under the auspices of Narkompros (Narodnyi komitet prosveshcheniia [Committee on Public Education]): “for research on the history of anti-Jewish pogroms,” “for the scholarly description of Jewish affairs of the former Ministry of Public Education,” and “for a scholarly edition of documents pertaining to ritual-murder trials.”¹² A whole galaxy of Petrograd Jewish academics participated in the work of these commissions, including Saul Ginsburg, a well-known historian and folklorist.¹³ Ginsburg’s relationship to the official documents was a result of his understanding that the history of Jews in Russia is an integral part of Russian history:

Even worse a problem for a long time was the difficulty with the obtaining of the second important type of written material—with the official archive-documents that have such great significance for the historian of Russian Judaism. Here he can study more clearly than elsewhere the politics of the Russian government and the Jewish question, its entire relationship to the Jewish population, its mostly hidden or masked motives, the Jewish legal situation, etc. Already by virtue of this alone one cannot sufficiently estimate the historiographical worth of the official archive materials. But it is a mistake to assume that they touch only the external, legal side of the erstwhile Jewish life in Russia. The government administration dealt also with the internal phenomena and events in Jewish life. It sought to regulate the Jewish life-style, Jewish literature, press, theater, Jewish religious matters, Jewish education, etc. Many, very many sides of Jewish innermost living are thereby reflected in the government documents.

True one must relate to them very carefully and critically, one must continuously sift and control with the aid of other, Jewish sources. But this in no way at all diminishes the really great worth that the official sources have for the researcher of our past.¹⁴

For thirteen years, right up to his emigration to the U.S. (1930), Ginsburg continued to research archival collections of the Tsarist government, including the archives of the Third Division of His Majesty’s Chancellery, Government

Council, Senate, Synod, the Military, the Ministry of War, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Public Education.¹⁵

At the same time that the Jewish archival commissions were organized in Petrograd, the Jewish Historical Archeographic Commission was established in Kiev under the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (1919). This commission examined collections in the Kiev Central Historical Archive. Ben-Zion Dinaburg (Dinur) was among its few employees. He constructed a plan for uncovering, collecting, and describing archival documents on the history of Ukrainian Jews. Thus, on the eve of his departure for Israel the future founder of the national historical archives took part in the archival work to reconstruct the history of Russian Jewry.¹⁶

THE REALIZATION OF THE CAHJP PROJECT IN FORMER SOVIET ARCHIVES

Many years of experience copying documents in the archives of various countries prepared CAHJP management to expand this practice to the government archives of the Soviet Union. As a result of his trip to the USSR in the spring of 1991, the CAHJP's director, Aryeh Segall, decided that it was necessary to conduct a complex examination of Soviet archives in order to bring to light and then copy Jewish archival collections, as well as materials pertaining to the history of Jews. The project began to materialize in 1992, having created a foundation for:

- Databases for the materials on Jewish history that had been put in Jewish and general collections of the former USSR;
- Collections comprising copies of documents on the history of Jews in the Russian Empire and USSR.¹⁷

In the first years of CAHJP's work in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, which coincided with the establishment of the countries' archival systems, agreements-in-principle were reached with the central archival administration of each country. These spoken or written agreements (later not renewed) did not remove the necessity to sign contracts with archives individually and coordinate with the "superiors" of the archival administration. Collaborative agreements with the central archives of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, and Minsk were signed in 1992-1993 for periods of three to five years, and, as a rule, they included the archives' obligation to participate in the search and registration of related materials and to produce copies of requested documents. For its part, CAHJP took on the responsibility of managing the search of archival materials

and financing the work. The contracts also expressed the parties' intentions to expand the collaborative effort—organizing joint publications, exhibitions, etc. As the archives acquired more independence, including financial independence, their management agreed to process materials “by copy orders,” preferring this method to international “contracts.” Over time, the registration itself of archival materials ended up in the hands of local researchers and archivists working from private agreements with CAHJP.

During the planning stages of our archival search, we took into account the work on the archival collections by Bershadskii, Gessen, Ginsburg, and Russian Jewish historians, and archival commissions that were their contemporaries, along with the opening of archival sources done in recent years (many local researchers have taken part directly in the CAHJP project). Directing our efforts to the demands of academic scholarship in Israel, we are striving to establish a documentary basis for present and future research projects.

We began the project in the central historical archives of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, and we are gradually extending it to municipal and district archives as well as other regions and countries (Uzbekistan, Moldova, Lithuania).

In central archives—the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) in St. Petersburg, the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents (RGADA) in Moscow, and the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) in Moscow—materials on the history of Jews in the Russian Empire are being uncovered and copied mainly from the archives of upper and central organs of power. However, in the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine (TsGIAU) in Kiev, and in the National Historical Archive of the Republic of Belarus (NIARB) in Minsk, the documents are mainly from the administrative institutions of the governors-general and the *gubernii* (provinces).

In addition to the official documents in central archives, we have also copied collections from general-Russian and general-Soviet Jewish organizations: the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment Among Jews in Russia (OPE, 1863-1929), the Society for the Attainment of Equal Rights for Russian Jews (1905-1907), he-Haluts (1917-1922), the Central Management of Jewish Communities in Russia (TsEVAAD, 1918-1919), among others; and collections from the federal and republic committees of various Jewish political parties: Poalei Zion (1916-1921), SERP (1917), Bund (1918-1921), among others. We should note that in the Central Government Historical Archive in St. Petersburg (TsGIA SPb) documents on Jewish cultural organizations whose activities were not limited to the territory of the capital have been copied, among them materials from the archive of the Jewish Historical-Ethnographical Society (1908-1929).¹⁸

The examination of *oblast'* (district) and municipal archives (in St. Petersburg, Vyborg, Kiev, Vinnitsa, Zhitomir, Kamenets-Podolskii, Odessa, Khar'kov, and others) has allowed us to delve into documents from provincial, district, and municipal governments and judicial institutions. Many official documents at the local level have a very direct relationship to the life of the Jewish communities of their corresponding cities and regions. They are distinguished by breadth of topic, high level of detail, and local color.

In district archives, CAHJP are also copying documentation from local Jewish communities (including birth, marriage, and death certificates), charities, educational institutions, and others. Materials from the Zhitomir Rabbinical Seminary (1848-1873) and the Zhitomir Jewish Academic Institute (1873-1886) from the State Archive of the Zhitomir District (GAZhO) hold special significance for a wide range of researchers.

In the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine (TsGIAU) in L'vov, and also in regional archives in L'vov, Ivano-Frankovsk, Ternopol, Lutsk, Rovno, and Chernovtsy, we are having various materials on the history of local Jewish communities copied that had been deposited in the archives of the corresponding Austrian, Polish, and Romanian government institutions. Also being copied is documentation on Jewish communities and organizations of Eastern Galicia, Volhynia, and West Bukovina.

Materials from military historical archives have extended the topical reach of the developing collection. In the Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA) in Moscow we have copied documents from various military departments, on recruiting, Cantonists, the service of Jews in the Russian army, the position of Jews in front-line zones and occupied territories during World War I, the relation of commanders to Jewish soldiers, etc. In the Russian State Archive of the Naval Fleet (RGAVMF) in St. Petersburg, we have copied materials on the service of Jews in Russian and Soviet fleets, the involvement of Jewish merchants in the founding and support of the Russian fleet from the end of the eighteenth century through the first third of the nineteenth century, among others.

The project participants are also trying to expand the timeframe of the collection of documents being copied. The earliest information on Jews from the middle of the sixteenth century has been discovered in judicial books from municipal and *zemstvo* courts, town councils and *ratushas* (municipal administrations). Registries of court documents from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, pertaining for the most part to Jewish communities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (on the territory of modern Belarus), have been copied in RGADA (Moscow) and NIARB (Minsk).

In the two central Ukrainian archives (TsGIAU in Kiev and L'vov) where large collections of court books from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries

are kept, we have systematically organized the uncovering and subsequent microfilming of documents relating to Jews. At the same time we continue to develop the work begun in the middle of the nineteenth century by the historian Bershadskii. The work of uncovering the documents and compiling inventories of them is being done by specialist paleographers who are employees of the two archives above.

The TsGIAU in Kiev has preserved record books of municipal and *zemstvo* courts, mainly from Volhynia. The oldest records are written in Old Russian,¹⁹ and seventeenth century records are mainly in Polish. Currently, we have compiled inventories (in Ukrainian) on the record books from: Kremenets municipal court (1543-1659), Kremenets *zemstvo* court (1630-1647), Lutsk municipal court (1565-1628), Lutsk *zemstvo* court (1566-1569), Vladimir-Volynskii municipal court (1566-1613), Zhitomir municipal court (1583-1652, 1734-1773), Kiev municipal court (1684-1719), and Vyzhva *ratusha* (1608-1684). Additionally, work has begun to build a thematic collection of inventories of court records on Jews during Khmel'nyts'kyi's time (1648-1657). Over 10,000 inventories have been compiled. The court records pertaining to the history of Jewish communities are being transferred to microfilm according to the lists in their inventories. It should be noted that in cases where the record books are in poor condition, microfilm is the only way to preserve record books for historical study. For those books where the writing has practically disappeared and only fragments remain,²⁰ the inventories are the only source of information.

The TsGIAU in L'vov contains court and town council books from the territory of the Russian *Województwo (Ruś Czerwona)* of the Kingdom of Poland. The records are in Latin and Polish (predominantly the latter in eighteenth-century records). To date, we have compiled inventories (in Polish) of the court records on Jews from record books from Belz municipal court (1546-1730), Busk municipal court (1559-1765), Terebovlia (Trembowla) municipal court (1632-1872), and Sambor town council (1680-1776). Over 4,000 inventories have been compiled.

The project's timeframe extends also into the modern period. Among the documents copied from the first years of Soviet rule are unique materials on the examination of Jewish towns by Jewish organizations and Soviet institutions (1920s, mainly in Belarus). The corresponding reports provide a high level of detail about the economic, demographic, and cultural situations of communities, as well as unique statistical data. Prewar materials from collections of central, government, and party institutions and their divisions that oversaw Jewish problems, as well as from collections of the federal and Belorussian OZET committees (1925-1938) have been copied in GARF in Moscow and the National Archive of the Republic of Belarus (NARB) in Minsk. Work on discovering and reproducing materials of the postwar period

requires special effort and laborious searching in order to overcome obstacles (including access to card catalogs of party organizations and personal collections) because, with rare exceptions, Jewish subjects are not distinguished in the titles of archival folders. Without conducting a systematical examination of these collections, project workers have managed to copy individual postwar documents in the collections of reorganized party archives and investigative files of the KGB.

THE RUSSIAN COLLECTION OF DOCUMENT COPIES IN CAHJP

Copies of archival materials are being made in various state archives of the former Soviet Union. CAHJP does the archival processing and cataloging (with the possible clarification or changing of names). The cataloging system of CAHJP is based on the national borders of 1939, with headings for population centers (communities) and regions. The catalog divisions by country and the headings of each division are in alphabetical order by population center and regions. Within each geographical heading, the catalog cards are added in chronological order. Every such card file reflects a collection of documents on the history of the particular community, region, or country as a whole.²¹

Currently, the "Russia-USSR" portion of the catalog includes information on more than 800 communities in the European part of Russia, Siberia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. Material copied on the history of Jewish communities in provinces of the Russian Empire (Bessarabia, Vilna, Grodno, Kovno, Livonia, Kholm, Estonia) whose territories were not part of the Soviet Union before the beginning of World War II in 1939, are filed under the corresponding catalog sections: "Romania," "Poland," "Lithuania," "Latvia," and "Estonia." Similarly, material copied on the history of Jews in Eastern Galicia, i.e., the L'vov, Tarnopol, and Stanislavov provinces (*województwa*) of Poland, are filed under the catalog section "Poland."

The "Russia-USSR" catalog section begins with a general card file of archival records pertaining to Russian Jewry as a whole, or to the communities of several regions simultaneously. The material filed here mainly reflects the law-making processes in the Russian government and its political relationship with Russian Jewry in the social, economic, cultural, and political spheres. The general card file also includes reference cards that point to series of documents that have the same general topic but are filed in the catalog under headings of different communities (for example, documents about military recruiting, the formation of state institutions of specialized instruction, pogroms). Out of approximately 1,500 cards from the general card file, more than 1,300 pertain to the pre-Soviet period of history.

As an example, we will describe a portion of the archival collection that is classified in the general “Russia-USSR” card index in the chronological period of the rule of Nicholas I (approximately 400 files).

The thirty-year reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855) fundamentally altered all areas of life for Russian Jewry, significantly accelerating its modernization. His Majesty’s Chancellery attained special significance in the federal-bureaucratic apparatus through its “Third Division,” a high-level police force granted wide authority. They observed Jews who were involved in illegal keeping of taverns, wine monopolies, contraband, minting of counterfeit coins, fake loans, etc. The Third Division took part in the investigation of Jews accused of using Christian blood²² and “profaning the Christian religion,”²³ cases of public disobedience (the Mstislav and Novoalexandrov riots²⁴), and incidents of mob-rule (the Slavuta and Ushitsa cases²⁵).

Being an organ of “higher surveillance” or, in other words, reporting personally to the Tsar about suspicious individuals and important events, the Third Department encouraged reports, including those from Jews. Local informants provided the basis for many reports. Jews reported on the local government and Kahal (Jewish self-rule) administrations, in the hope of receiving protection by the higher authorities; they employed denunciations against competitors. They tried to enter the capital, where they were not permitted, on the pretext of reporting personally to the Tsar regarding “affairs of governmental importance.” Mostly, however, they reported in the expectation of receiving a reward. Records of informants are part of the materials copied: the Upper-Dneprovsk Rabbi Katzenellenbogen (1837) informed on a “Hasidic sect that did not recognize the government in power”; M. Blank (Lenin’s great-grandfather, 1845) reported “on the harmfulness of the Jewish religion”; A. Kuperbant (1846) reported on the “agreement” of Sir Moses Montefiore and the Hasidic Rabbi Israel Friedman of Ruzhin against the Russian government, and also a whole series of reports about participants in the Polish Rebellion of 1830-1831.

The CAHJP collection has also been filled with materials about the participation of the “higher police” in developing legislative measures and in creating government political policy towards Jews (the leaders of the chancellery of the Third Division were part of the Jewish committees). Among these materials are “notes” on Jews by the agent and employee of the secret police K. Fodello (1827), a “Christianized Jew”; by the well-known Jewish Enlightenment figure (*maskil*) L. Zel’tser (1848), and many others. In addition, they include notes on various projects to reconstruct Jewish life, including those of the *maskilim* M. Gofman (1838), N. Rosenthal (1840), and the Vilna Jewish censor V. Tugenhold (1840).

Of particular interest are the documents from various institutions involved in reforming legislation about Jews. They include the Fourth Jewish Committee (1823-1835), whose activity concluded with the affirmation of a new “Position regarding the Jews.” In 1832 the Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Faiths of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was established as part of the development and implementation of a political policy towards Jews. The first rabbinical commission to be elected by the Jewish communities themselves gathered under its auspices in 1852. Since the government’s efforts for reform did not bring the results desired, another “fundamental reformation of Jews in Russia” was entrusted to the Fifth Jewish Committee (1840-1865).

Document copies have gone into the CAHJP collection not only from the aforementioned government institutions (documents from the Fourth Jewish Committee have been copied from the archives of the General Chancellery of the Ministry of Finance), but also from the Department of Spiritual Affairs of Foreign Faiths of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Department of Public Education, the Central Office of Censorship, Butlerin Committee on Printing Matters, St. Petersburg and Kiev Censorship Committees, Chancellery of the Kiev Division of Censorship, Chancellery of the Kiev, Volhynia, and Podolia Governor General, the Chancellery of the Novorossiia [including the Ekaterinoslav and Kherson *gubernii*] and Bessarabia Governor General, the Podolia provincial administration, the Minsk Palace of State, the Administration of the Kiev Educational Circle, the Volhynia Jewish School Commission, and also from the archives of the Military: Chancellery of the Military Minister, Chancellery and Inspection Department of the Naval Ministry, Chancellery of the Main Naval Headquarters, the Department of Military Settlements; from the Zhitomir Rabbi School Archive; and from the personal archives of the Admirals A. Men’shikov and A. Greig.

The following is a list of some of the most characteristic topics in the archival material collected:

- Military service
The introduction of conscription for Jews; the rights of Cantonists in army and naval departments; the use of draft duty in “debt apportioning”; converting Jewish recruits to Christianity and rewarding the converts; promoting Jews who distinguished themselves in battle to non-commissioned officer rank and awarding them medals of honor; granting some rights to Jewish medics in the Navy; marriages, divorces, and burial rules for Jewish servicemen; communities’ opposition to the military draft, draft evasion by Jews; aid provided by communities to Cantonists in accordance with Jewish tradition.

- **Forced Exile and Oppression**
The restriction on Jews about living in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, and Tbilisi; the eviction of Jews from villages in a 50-verst area from the border, from military settlements, and from the Black Sea ports Sebastopol and Nikolaev; prohibiting Jews from renting manors, rural and roadside inns, and post offices; prohibiting Jews from hiring Christians; banning Jews from government work and mines; prohibiting traditional Jewish attire; dividing Jews into different classes.
- **Attracting Jews to Agriculture**
The resettlement of Jews from western provinces to the Tobolsk province and Omsk district, into farming colonies of the Kherson and Ekaterinoslav provinces; Jewish farming colonies in the Podolia province.
- **Policies on Jewish Education**
Submitting educational institutions to the supervision of the Ministry of Public Education (1844); the organization and work of rabbinical schools, and public and private Jewish schools; the transformation of Talmud Torahs into primary and secondary-level public schools; the use of income from Jewish printing houses for the education of Jewish children.
- **Policies on the Publication and Censorship of Jewish books**
The censorship of Jewish books, including those imported into Russia; the activities of the Vilna Censorship Committee; the closure of Jewish printing houses in all cities except for Vilna and Kiev; the publishing of textbooks for Jewish schools; the granting of provincial governments' right to destroy banned Jewish books.
- **Regulation of Religious Life in the Communities**
The election, appointment, and dismissal of rabbis; gatherings and activities of the Rabbinical Commission (1852).
- **Economic Situation of the Communities**
The payment of community debts from a retail tax on Jewish vendors; payment plans for back taxes; liquidation of community debts.
- **Connection Between Russian Jewry and Eretz-Israel**
The collection of aid for Jews in Palestine; dissemination of appeals for resurrecting the Jerusalem Temple.
- **Karaites**
Exemption of Karaites from restrictions pertaining to Jews.

In addition to “general” documentation on the history of Jews in Russia, a significant part of the CAHJP’s “Russia” collection consists of copies of records on the history of more than 800 Jewish communities in the Russian Em-

pire (as defined by the 1939 borders of the Soviet Union) during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These documents to some extent allow the historical life of each community to be reconstructed, covering various topics, and over a long time span. The overall extent of the documentation collected on a particular community depends on the community's size, activities, and significance in Jewish history, and also on the level of development of the corresponding government archives.²⁶

Thus, for example, the document collection on the history of Jews in Odessa contains more than 250 files (1799-1935), St. Petersburg—approximately 250 files (1780-1930), Minsk—approximately 200 files (1683-1935), Zhitomir—more than 150 files (1583-1918), Medzhibozh—approximately 100 files (1576-1917), and Vitebsk—approximately 80 files (1555-1916).

The following description of a collection of archival materials on the history of the Jewish community in the small Ukrainian town Tul'chin serves as an example. The archival documentation collected (1648-1933) includes more than 50 files from various archives in the Ukraine and Russia: The Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Kiev, the Central State Archive of the Higher Organs of the Government of Ukraine in Kiev, the State Archive of the Vinnitsa *Oblast'*, the State Archive of the Khmel'nitskii *Oblast'* (in Kamenets-Podol'sk), the Manuscript Division of the Stefanek Library of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in L'vov, the Russian State Archive of Ancient Records (RGADA) in Moscow, and the State Archive of the Russian Federation in Moscow. In their ensemble, the archival records copied from the collections of central, *guberniia*, and *uezd* administrative, judicial, and police institutions—and also from the collections of local Soviet and Communist Party administrations—allow one to reconstruct the main events in the community's history.

The first mention of the town Tul'chin in the Bratslav *województwo* of the Kingdom of Poland comes from the beginning of the seventeenth century. By mid-century a Jewish community had formed, which became one of the first victims of the Cossack Rebellion under the control of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi (1648-1649). The story of the "Tul'chin massacre" entered into most Jewish chronicles of this era, and also into Polish and Ukrainian descriptions of the events. Many of the essential details can be clarified thanks to documents copied in CAHJP: the story of the Polish officer Rościszewski, who participated in the battle in Tul'chin (June 24, 1648), and a letter from S. Kusiewicz, a representative of the municipal government of L'vov (July 8, 1648).

Life in the Jewish community in Tul'chin resumed as early as the first third of the eighteenth century. Evidence of this comes from gravestones in a Tul'chin Jewish cemetery. Photographs of the earliest gravestones are in the CAHJP photograph collection.

By the time of the second partition of Poland (1792), the Jewish community of Tul'chin had become one of the most prominent and prosperous communities in the region. The predominance of Jews among Tul'chin craftsmen and merchants is noted in the documentation from the first part of the history of the town within the Russian Empire (this tendency was reflected in later documents: in 1832, out of the twenty-eight people registered as merchants in Tul'chin, twenty-seven were Jews). The so-called "Topographical Description of Bratslav *Uezd* of Podolia Province" (compiled at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries) presents detailed information on the development of Tul'chin, and the industrial and trade enterprises of the Jewish population, and its numbers.

The era of Nicholas I is reflected most extensively in documentation on the history of the community. Records from the *uezd* court reveal the reaction of Tul'chin Jews to the Imperial decree about conscription of Jews (1827), to helping conscripts escape, to hiding deserters, and also to felonies like theft, horse stealing, illegal border crossing, and insulting representatives of the local government. Records from the provincial courts also reflect the conflicts between local Jews and representatives of the Kahal administration, mainly over the expenditure of community funds money and the violation of conscription laws. The abolition of the Kahal (1844) accelerated the fragmentation of communities: according to documents from 1852 there were eleven prayer houses (all members of their boards were listed by name). Documents from 1852 to 1853 present information on the fulfillment of the imperial decree in Tul'chin (1851) about "dividing Jews into categories" (i.e., "useful" and "useless" categories), and about local Jews' reaction to this decree.

Documents from the archive of the governor-general report on the innovations of Alexander II during the "era of great reform," including the election of members of "spiritual boards" in Jewish prayer houses in Tul'chin. Information on the recurring fires in Tul'chin—the worst of which broke out in 1853 and 1856—is reported there. In connection with the organization of public education for Jews, starting in the mid-nineteenth century, the government increased its control over traditional Jewish education. This is reflected in the following documents among the materials copied: a record on the Tul'chin private school for Jewish girls, and information on *heders* (elementary-level religious schools) and *melamdin* (teachers in *heders*) in Tul'chin.

The documentation collected includes statistical data on the Jewish population of Tul'chin (including the years 1852, 1866, 1889, and 1896), records about Jewish charities, a Jewish hospital, as well as a local Jewish post office, which alarmed the government.

Small anti-Jewish “disturbances” in Tul’chin itself and the pogroms in surrounding towns are reported in documents from the pogrom eras (1881-1882, 1905-1906).

Documentation from the 1910s reflects the diverse activities of Tul’chin Jewish merchants, including the savings and loan association and free-loan society that they founded.

Massacres during the Civil War (1919-20) destroyed Tul’chin, leaving dozens of children orphaned. The efforts of the Jewish aid organization were directed first toward the construction of a hospital and a school in Tul’chin (1922-23). This is reported in the documents collected.

The first actions of the Soviet power are reported in documents about the Tul’chin Jewish Pedagogical Technical School (1920s), about the organization of a local Jewish council (1925), and about the closing of Jewish prayer houses (1925).

The famine during 1932-1933 in Ukraine did not exclude Jewish towns. According to information from the Vinnitsa *Obkom* (district committee) in Tul’chin, “47 deaths among impoverished Jews” were recorded through February 15, 1933.

CONCLUSION

As a result of decades of work in the archives of the former Soviet Union, a database of materials on the history of Jews has been created in the CAHJP. The materials are located in more than eighty archives and manuscript divisions of libraries and museums in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Uzbekistan. This database includes inventories of Jewish collections, as well as record lists and documents on Jewish history in governmental and private collections. It allows CAHJP employees to plan the searching and reproduction of documents in dozens of archives in various countries and also provides convenient assistance for researchers, helping them to organize their archival search in an optimal way.

A vast collection of copied material on the history of Jews in the Russian Empire and USSR (approximately 1.5 million pages of documents in microfilm, microfiche, and photocopies) has been created in CAHJP. The microfilm collection of documents on the history of Jews in Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Germany, and the land of Israel has also been significantly increased.

The CAHJP plans to develop the geographical scope of the project further, by examining and reproducing documents in countries of the Baltic, Middle East, and Caucasus. Preparing documentary collections for publication is part

of the project's new directions. Soon to appear are *Regesty zapisei o evreiakh v aktovykh knigakh Lutskogo grodskogo suda (vtoraia polovina XVI v.)* (Registers of Records on Jews in the Record Books of the Lutsk Municipal Court: Second Half of the Sixteenth Century) and *Dokumenty po istorii evreev iz arkhiva Tre'tego otdeleniia sobstvennoi ego imperatorskogo velichestva kantseliarii* (Documents on the History of the Jews from the Archive of the Third Division of His Majesty's Chancellery).

Even today, research on various topics relating to the history of Russian Jewry and individual communities, and genealogical work, are being conducted using the "Russian" CAHJP collection that is still in formation. Thus, the dreams of the "founding fathers" of Russian Jewish historiography to build a documentary base for historical research are being fulfilled today in Jerusalem.

NOTES

1. See also the 1996 review of CAHJP material uncovered and copied from government archives of the former USSR: Benjamin Lukin, Anat Peri, "Israeli Archives with Material on Russian Jewish History: The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 1 (1996): 65-81.

2. We refer to archives or documents from Jewish communities, societies, organizations, parties, or prominent Jewish activists as "Jewish" collections; in contrast to material pertaining to Jews in "general" collections, i.e., the archives of various federal government, social, municipal, and church institutions, as well as the personal archives of government officials or family archives from large landowners.

3. For a detailed guide to archival publications during 1989-99, see E. I. Melamed, comp. and D. A. Eliashevich, ed., *Arkhivnaia iudaika Rossii, Ukrainy i Belorussii: materialy dlia ukazatel'ia literatury* (Archival Judaica of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus: Reference Materials) (St. Petersburg, 2001), 104.

4. Project Judaica, a research and pedagogical program that is carried out jointly by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (New York), the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York), and the Russian State University of the Humanities (RGGU; Moscow), has an especially wide scope. The description of "Jewish" and "general" archive collections containing materials on Jewish history, and the preparation of corresponding guides to archives, museums, and libraries fall under the scope of this project. See Dorit Sallis and Marek Web, eds., *Jewish Documentary Sources in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus: A Preliminary List* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1996), 164; Mark S. Kupovetskii, E. V. Starostin and Marek Web, eds., *Dokumenty po istorii i kul'ture evreev v arkhivakh Moskvy: putevoditel'* (Documents in Moscow Archives on the History and Culture of the Jews: Guidebook) (Moscow: RGGU, 1997), 503.

5. For the creation of the Jewish Historical General Archives and for the beginning stages of activities of the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, see: *The Jewish Historical General Archives* (Jerusalem, 1961), 19 (English), 13 (Hebrew); *The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Newsletter* 1-5 (Jerusalem,

1970-1976). For the participation of Dinur and Meisel in the organization of the archives, see also: Arielle Rein, "The Historian as a Nation-Builder: Ben-Zion Dinur's Evolution and Enterprise" [Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000]: 189-196.

6. From the opening speech by Meisel at the ceremony to celebrate the opening of the General Archive of the History of the Jewish People on 30 January 1947 (unpublished). See: Rein, "The Historian as a Nation-Builder," 191.

7. Eugen Täubler, "Zur Einführung," *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der Deutschen Juden* 1, no. 1 (Leipzig, 1908-9): 1-8.

8. Daniel J. Cohen, "Thirty Years of Survey in European Archives by the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People," *Ginzei Am Olam, The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Newsletter* 10 (Jerusalem, 1981): ix-xiii.

9. S. M. Dubnov, "Ob izuchenii istorii russkikh evreev i ob uchrezhdenii russko-evreiskogo istoricheskogo obshchestva" (Study of the History of Russian Jews and the Institution of the Russian Jewish Historical Society), *Voskhod* 4-9 (1891), 1-91; S. M. Dubnov, "O sovokupnoi rabote po sobiraniiu materialov dlia istorii russkikh evreev" (On the Joint Work of Gathering Materials for a History of Russian Jews), *Voskhod* 11 (1891): 34-38. Bershadskii collected, translated, and edited for publication the registries of records on Jews in court books of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries: S. A. Bershadskii, *Russko-evreiskii arkhiv: dokumenty i materialy dlia istorii evreev v Rossii* (The Russian-Jewish Archive: Documents and Materials for the History of Jews in Russia), vols. 1-2 (St. Petersburg, 1882); vol. 3 (St. Petersburg, 1903). The registries of archival documents that remain unpublished are currently located in the collection of the Jewish Historical-Ethnographical Society, in the Central State Historical Archive (TsGIA), in St. Petersburg.

10. For the work by the Jewish Historical-Ethnographical Commission, see: Benyamin Lukin, "K stoletiiu obrazovaniia Peterburgskoi nauchnoi shkoly evreiskoi istorii" (Centenary of the Founding of the St. Petersburg Academic School of Jewish History), *Istoriia evreev v Rossii: problemy istochnikovedeniia i istoriografii* (History of the Jews in Russia: Problems in the Study of Sources and Historiography) (St. Petersburg, 1993), 13-26. The committee prepared and published: *Regesty i nadpisi: svod materialov dlia istorii evreev v Rossii: 80 g.-1800 g.* (Registries and Inscriptions: A Collection of Materials on the History of Jews in Russia: 80-1800), vols. 1-3 (St. Petersburg, 1899-1913).

11. Gessen wrote about the beginning stages of his archival research in letters to Dubnov. See: "Ia smotriu na Vas, kak na svoego uchitelia . . . (Pis'ma Iu. I. Gessena k S. M. Dubnovu)" (I look at you like my teacher . . . [Letters from Iu. I. Gessen to S. M. Dubnov]), *Vestnik Evreiskogo universiteta* 7/22 (2000): 291-310. For Gessen's publications on Russian Jewish history, see his: *Istoriia evreev v Rossii* (History of the Jews in Russia) (St. Petersburg, 1914); *Istoriia evreiskogo naroda v Rossii* (History of the Jewish People in Russia), vol. 1 (Petrograd, 1916; 1925) vol. 2 (Leningrad, 1927). The archival documents copied by Gessen were destroyed, together with his personal archive, during the blockade of Leningrad (1941-1944).

12. The results of work by the first two commissions were published in: S. M. Dubnov and G. Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni, eds., *Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii: Dubossarskoe i Kishinevskoe dela 1903 g.* (Materials on the History of Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia: The Dubossar and Kishinev Cases of 1903), vol. 1 (Petrograd, 1919); G. Ia. Krasnyi-Admoni, ed., *Materialy dlia istorii antievreiskikh pogromov v Rossii: vos'midesiatye gody* (Materials on the History of

Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia: The Eighties), vol. 2 (Petrograd; Moscow, 1923); S. M. Lozinskii, ed. and Saul Ginsburg, comp., *Opisanie del byvshego arkhiva Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia: kazennye evreiskie uchilishcha: opisanie del byvshego arkhiva Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* (Description of Records in the Former Archive of the Ministry of Public Education: Jewish Public Schools: Description of Records from the Former Archive of the Ministry of Public Education), vol. 1 (Petrograd, 1919). The commission on ritual murder trials was dissolved in 1920 by the Jewish section of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and did not publish its drafts.

13. When Ginsburg first came to the state archives (1917), he was already a well-known historian, author of books and articles, and editor (1908-1913) of the Jewish historical almanac *Perezhitoe* (The Past). He began the collection of materials on Jewish life with records on Jewish folklore, which went into the collection: Saul Ginsburg and P. Marek, *Evreiskie narodnye pesni v Rossii* (Jewish Folk Songs in Russia) (St. Petersburg, 1901), 332. Later, he continued to collect materials from family archives, which he used in his research and publications.

14. Saul M. Ginsburg, *The Drama of Slavuta*, translated from the Yiddish by E. M. Probaum (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), x-xi. Ginsburg used the majority of the archival materials during the 1930s, while preparing a series of articles on the history of Jews in Russia during the nineteenth century for the largest American Yiddish newspaper, *Forverts*. Later, these articles became the only source of historical information for many western researchers, as the documents themselves were unavailable during their decades in Soviet archival storage.

15. The collection of document copies from the archives in the aforementioned government institutions is located in Ginsburg's personal archives in the Manuscript Division of the National Library of Israel.

16. For Dinaburg's participation in the work of the Jewish Archeographical Commission, see: Rein, "The Historian as a Nation-BUILDER," 97. The "builders of proletarian Jewish studies" in the USSR also understood the significance of documents from the Tsarist government for reconstructing Jewish history. They liquidated the Kiev Commission and the Jewish scholarly institutions of Leningrad, and then created the Jewish Section in the Central Historical Archive of Kiev (1929), which continued work on the registration of archival documents concerning Jewish history.

17. Until 1992, the "Russian" materials in the CAHJP comprised individual documents from the archives of ORT and the Jewish Colonization Association, the personal archives of S. M. Dubnov, Solomon Mikhoels, David Mowshovitch, Leo Motzkin, Aaron Steinberg, and others, as well as individual records and documents donated to the archive by various people. The "Russian" collection included microfilms from the Public Record Office (London), the Alliance Israélite Universelle (Paris), the American Jewish Archives (Cincinnati), and others.

18. See: Benjamin (Benjamin) Lukin, "Archive of the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society: History and Present Condition," *Jews in Eastern Europe* 1 (1993): 45-61.

19. Recently, as a rule, the language of these and similar documents has been called the "administrative language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania."

20. In particular, some books from the Kremenets municipal and *zemstvo* courts are in such condition.

21. Research on the “Russian” collection is facilitated by reference cards in the catalog section “Russia-USSR,” as well as extra card files of personal names, private collections, and Jewish organizational collections.

22. Including cases on ritual slanders in Velizh (1823-35), Grodno (second investigation 1826-1830), Tel’cha (1827), Bobovka (1829), and Starokonstaninov (1833).

23. Including the files: “Jews insulting objects of worship during the procession” (Zhizhmory, 1851), “Jews’ attack on a priest and desecration of objects of worship” (Knyshin, 1847), “Profanation of Christianity” (Polonnoe, 1854).

24. Attempts by Jews to resist the police, e.g., while the latter confiscated contraband from them, as in Novoaleksandrovsk (1839) and Mstislavl (1844), were called “riots” in the official correspondence.

25. The Slavuta case accused the owners of a Jewish printing house in the town Slavuta and the Shapiro brothers, who were publishers, of the murder of the book-binder Protagain. The Ushitsa case accused Jews in the town Novaia Ushitsa and other nearby towns of murdering two informants; among those accused was the Hasidic Rabbi Israel Friedman, of Ruzhin.

26. CAHJP’s director, Hadassah Assouline, spoke at a conference of archivists in Potsdam in July 1999 about how the CAHJP creates the historical documentation of individual communities, such as Lvov, on the basis of archival collections in various countries. See: Hadassah Assouline, “The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People,” *Preserving Jewish Archives as a Part of the European Cultural Heritage* (Paris, 2001), 220-227.

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