

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



The rise of antisemitism today throughout the world has many faces and disguises. Anti-Zionism, age-old stereotypes, the medieval blood libel fused with accusations of world domination contained in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Holocaust Denial and the myth

of what today is called, *Zydokomuna* (Jew-communism) is now prevalent throughout Eastern Europe and the United States. One of the root causes underpinning antisemitism is pervasive historical ignorance. YIVO is uniquely placed to address this ignorance. By making YIVO's collections available to the world for the first time through the Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Online Collections project, YIVO allows scholars, individuals, and institutions to confront myths, slanders, and stereotypes with robust historical evidence.

CONTACT

For more information, please contact the YIVO Development Department: **212.294.6156**

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These materials provide insight about the age-old disease of antisemitism and irrefutable evidence of its devastating consequences, thereby countering the world of lies, misconceptions, and hatred upon which antisemitism thrives. In the coming months, YIVO will develop new online educational and public programs, which use these precious materials that both connect us to our past and help us shape our future.

Now is your opportunity to help us in our vital educational mission by supporting our fundraising effort to raise \$1 million to complete this historic project.

Jonathan Brent
Executive Director & CEO



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THE EDWARD BLANK YIVO VILNA ONLINE COLLECTIONS

Summer 2019
NEWSLETTER

About the Project

"THESE MATERIALS ARE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS"

During World War II, the Nazis looted YIVO's archive and library, along with other Jewish libraries in Vilnius, Lithuania. The Jews who were forced to sort the materials for the Nazis risked their lives to smuggle these rare treasures to hiding places in the Vilna Ghetto. Much was destroyed, but some of the materials were returned to YIVO (who by then relocated to the United States) with the help of the U.S. Army. Other items remained in Vilnius to be recovered and rescued from the Soviets by a Lithuanian librarian, who hid them for over 40 years until they were rediscovered in 1988. In 2017, approximately 200,000 additional documents were discovered in Lithuania, including rare and unpublished works.

The Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Online Collections project, launched in 2015, is a \$7 million, international landmark digital initiative to process, conserve, and digitally reunite YIVO's divided prewar library and archival collections through a dedicated web portal. These materials include newly-discovered Holocaust documentation and the remnants of the famed Strashun Library.

This project is a partnership between the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the Lithuanian Central State Archives, the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, and the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.

It has inspired, funders, scholars, and laypeople around the world.

DIGITIZATION PROGRESS THROUGH
JUNE 1, 2019

OVER 2.8 MILLION PAGES DIGITIZED



Over 95%
books digitized
[Project goal: 12,500 books]



Over 35%
archival
documents digitized
[Project goal:
Est. 2 million pages]



1.32 million
images available online
(books and documents)
[Project goal:
Est. 4.1 million pages]

YIVO has raised **\$5.9 million** out of **\$7 million**

VILNACOLLECTIONS.YIVO.ORG

NEWS & UPDATES

YIVO Receives \$193,000 Matching Grant from NEH

YIVO has received a \$193,000 matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to process, conserve, and digitize the archival materials found in the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania in 2017. This collection is estimated at up to 200,000 pages of original archival material which came to light well after the Vilna Online Collections project began. YIVO's commitment to including these hidden gems in the project increased the scope of archival work by over 15%. This grant enables us to digitize every page. Work on processing these materials began in January.

Half a Million Archival Pages Viewable Online

The Vilna Online Collections team celebrates the milestone of putting half a million pages of prewar archival material online. With over half of the archival materials from the Collection now processed and digitized, the work of ingesting materials onto the website has picked up pace and efficiency. This material comes from over 20 different collections, including several which are physically located in Lithuania.

Materials currently viewable online include administrative records for pre-WWII YIVO in Vilnius and the records of several Jewish Community Councils around Eastern Europe before 1940. Also online are the papers of the Mizрах Yidisher Historisher Archiv (MYHA), which collected information about pogroms in Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and Russia during the 1910s and '20s, along with a substantial collection of Yiddish literature and language materials.

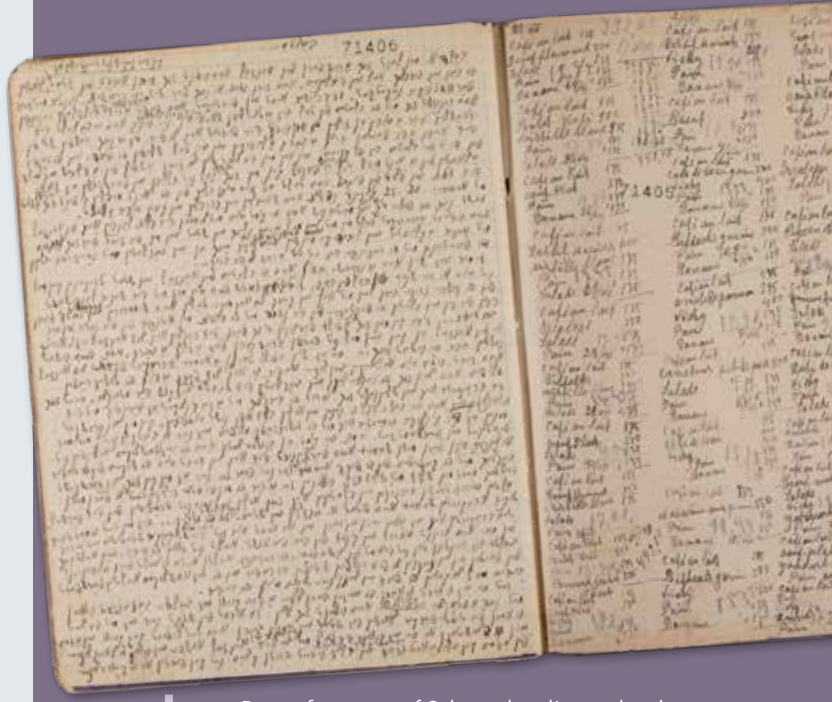
View these materials through vilmacollections.yivo.org and YIVO's shared catalog with the Center for Jewish History, search.cjh.org.

Work at the Wroblewski Library Completed

In order to save YIVO materials from the destructive tendencies of the Soviet regime, Lithuanian librarian Antanas Ulpis hid our documents in multiple locations throughout Vilnius. It came to light that in addition to the basement of the Carmelite monastery, which housed the Book Chamber of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic (where most of YIVO's collections were found in the 1980s), he hid them in other libraries around Vilnius. One such repository was the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, where over 22,000 pages of YIVO materials were found in 2016. These materials have been processed, conserved, and described by the Wroblewski's archivists and librarians, with YIVO's support. Digital copies have been delivered to YIVO and will be reunited with the rest of the Vilna Online Collections this year. They will also be able to be viewed online.

YIVO Opens In-House Digital Lab: First Collection Digitized

In April, YIVO opened its first in-house digital lab. The lab will coordinate the digitization, online accessibility, and digital preservation of the remaining items from the Vilna Online Collections project, as well as all future digital assets. **The Papers of Shalom Schwarzbard** is the first collection digitized in the lab. Schwarzbard, a Russian-born watchmaker, writer, and activist, was acquitted of the 1926 assassination of Simon Petlyura after a globally publicized trial in 1927. Petlyura was widely blamed for pogroms against Ukrainian Jews from 1918-21. His papers will soon be visible through the project website.



Pages from one of Schwarzbard's notebooks, a memoir. The right side has a list of expenses, mostly food and drink. RG 85, Folder 896. YIVO Archives.

President of the Republic of Lithuania Visits YIVO



In March, YIVO proudly hosted the President of the Republic of Lithuania, H.E. Ms. Dalia Grybauskaitė, in our first ever presidential visit from the Republic of Lithuania. During the meeting, the President and YIVO representatives discussed ways to expand current cooperation and implement joint projects in 2020. This visit highlights the value of the ties between Lithuania and YIVO. It underlines the importance of YIVO's mission and activities in Lithuania, which has been home to such a vibrant Jewish community.

Our Donors*

We greatly appreciate and acknowledge the following donors for their generous support of this project:

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*AS OF JUNE 1, 2019

