

## **YIVO INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH RESEARCH**

In 1925, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research was founded in Vilna (Wilno, Poland; now Vilnius, Lithuania), by key European intellectuals, including Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud, to record and study the history, language, literature, and culture of the Jews of Eastern Europe. In 1940, YIVO moved its permanent headquarters to New York City, becoming the only European pre-Holocaust institution to transfer its mission to the United States.

During World War II, several of YIVO's leading scholars managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Europe and continued their work in the United States. After the war, through the efforts of survivors, the United States Army and others, a significant part of YIVO's collections were reclaimed and brought to its New York headquarters.

In 1995, YIVO became a founding partner of the Center for Jewish History. The Center, an affiliate of the Smithsonian, is the largest repository of Jewish history, culture and experience outside of the State of Israel. Along with YIVO and the four other partner organizations – American Jewish Historical Society, American Sephardi Federation, Leo Baeck Institute and Yeshiva University Museum – its mission is to preserve, research, and educate by fostering the creation and dissemination of knowledge and by making the historical and cultural record of the Jewish people readily accessible to scholars, students and the general public.

The YIVO Archives holds over 23 million documents, photographs, recordings, posters, films, videotapes, and items of ephemera. These include the world's largest collection of East European Jewish sound recordings; over 200,000 photographs; 400+ videos and films; and 50,000 posters documenting Jewish life from the 1900s to the present. YIVO also has thousands of handwritten eyewitness accounts by Holocaust survivors and displaced persons; community records and documents from the Warsaw, Lodz and Vilna ghettos; over 750 memorial books from Jewish communities in Poland and neighboring countries; records of early immigrant relief and rescue organizations; autobiographies of hundreds of American Jewish immigrants; the Bund Archives and Library that traces the Jewish Labor Movement from its inception in Vilna in 1897; and the world's most extensive Yiddish music and theater collection.

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