

Preface

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This volume of the annual series *Slavic & Jewish Cultures: Dialogue, Similarities, Differences* is entitled “*The Time of Change*” in *Slavic and Jewish Cultural Traditions*. It contains revised versions of selected papers delivered during the international conference “*The Time of Change*” in *Slavic and Jewish Cultural Traditions* held in Moscow on December 1–3, 2024². The conference was the twenty-eighth annual meeting of scholars whose research interests focus on Jewish-Christian cultural contacts, ethno-confessional dialogue, and the mutual influence of Jewish and Slavic traditions. The project, which includes conferences and publication, is being conducted by the Center for Slavic-Judaic Studies of the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the Autonomous non-profit organization for Academic Research and Humanitarian Purposes Center “Sefer”. The conference featured 39 speakers from Russia, Belarus, Israel, Kazakhstan, and the USA. The speakers presented a total of 38 papers.

Drawing on the centuries-long ethno-cultural coexistence between Slavs and Jews, this study, examines issues related to overcoming crises and social upheavals (changes in social order, social breakdown, class stratification, revolutions, departure from the Pale of Settlement, the people and the state, migrations, the Holocaust, periods of xenophobia, confessional conflicts, and struggle against religion, transition from peace to war and from war to peace). It also analyzes cultural phenomena characteristic of the “time of change” (innovation and conservatism in traditional culture, the transformation of ethno-cultural stereotypes in the context of new formations, and ethno-linguistic processes within socio-political contexts). The “time of change” is not only a period of instability but also a time of making choices; a change of epochs is time for creating scenarios for the future. The image of changing times is re-

² For a conference report, see: Kopchenova, I. V. International Conference “The Time of Change” in Slavic and Jewish Cultural Traditions. *Slavyanovedeniye* [Slavic Studies], #3, 2025, pp. 148–153.

flected in historical and ego-documents, in works of literature and folklore, in texts of oral history, and in the language and symbols of culture.

Based on the proceedings of the 2024 conference, this book is the 26th volume in a series that has already gained recognition from academic community in Russia and abroad and acquired its own audience. Since 1998, this series has published volumes dedicated to the analysis (historical, philosophical, linguistic, ethnographic, and cultural) of various mechanisms of interaction between Slavic and Jewish cultural traditions. Since 2017, the series *Slavic & Jewish Cultures: Dialogue, Similarities, Differences* has reached a new level, becoming a peer-reviewed continuous publication (an annual). In June 2023, the annual was included in the Scopus international database for scientific indexing and citation (all volumes published since 2019). Starting in 2025, the publication is included in the Russian unified state register of scientific publications, otherwise known as the *White List*.

The book “*The Time of Change*” in *Slavic and Jewish Cultural Traditions* features 16 articles by scholars from Belarus, Russia, and Israel, whose research addresses a wide range of topics.

The book opens with a series of articles that deal with important texts from various periods of Karaite history. *Ekaterina Belkina* (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS; St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg), in her article “*The Book of the Wars of the Lord*” by *Salmon Ben Yeruham: a “Lost” Text of Karaite Polemics with the Rabbanites in the 10th Century* presents the initial stages of studying the text and a translation from Hebrew into Russian of two little-studied manuscript copies of Salmon ben Yeruhim’s work from the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. The significance of this text for the “time of change” is determined both by its literary role in the formation of the Karaite movement in Judaism and its “topical relevance” to the 10th-century Near Eastern diasporas at the crossroads between Rabbanites and Karaites. *Maxim Gammal* (Institute of Asian and African Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow), in his article *On the Reception of Haskalah Ideas in the Karaite Community of the Crimea: The case of the Literary Works of Abraham Lutsky and Ilya Kazas*, reveals the limited reception of the ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) in the Crimean Karaite community in the 19th century. The limited impact of the Enlightenment ideology had to do, among other things, with the granting of equal rights with the

Christian population of the Russian Empire to the Karaites in 1863. This meant that the Karaites had no need to fight for the emancipation – a key component of the *Haskalah* movement.

Several articles address the life of Jews outside the Pale of Settlement in the Russian Empire, a context in which change became inevitable. *Dmitry Feldman* (Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, RGADA, Moscow), in his article *Beyond the Pale of Settlement: Jewish Addresses in Saint Petersburg at the Turn of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, examines the under-researched topic of Jewish residence in early 19th-century St. Petersburg, outside the recently introduced Pale of Settlement (established by the decree of December 23, 1791). This research ultimately allows for a comparison of the circumstances of Jewish residence in Moscow and St. Petersburg, thereby expanding, deepening, and detailing our understanding of the everyday life of Jews in Russia during the period in question. *Ekaterina Norkina* (St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg), in her article *Jewish Students in Saint Petersburg in the Early 20th Century: The Paths of Adaptation and Survival Strategies*, explores how Jewish applicants and students in the early 20th century navigated crises related to the process of obtaining higher education in St. Petersburg. These challenges included the denial of enrollment, expulsion, forced interruption of studies due to conscription or military service during the First World War, and the life-altering decision to pursue higher education, which involved moving to the city and entering a new “time of change” in students’ lives.

A number of articles are devoted to the reflection of the “time of change” in press and literature from the 19th to the early 21st centuries. *Ilya Pechenin* (Russian State Library, Moscow), in his article *The Transformation of Jewish Press in the Russian Empire at the Beginning of the 20th Century*, examines the phenomenon of the radical transformation of Jewish press at the turn of the century. The transformation was driven by several factors, such as censorship, attacks from Anti-Semitic press, the “war of languages” (between Yiddish and Hebrew), and the unprecedented flourishing of Jewish political life. *George Prokhorov* (State Social and Humanities University, Kolomna), in his article *The Jewish People in the Russian-Language Press of Jewish Assimilationists in the Second Half of the 19th Century*, explores secular and religious strands of the national Jewish project proposed by the 19th-century assimilationists (in the texts of A. Alekseev (Vulf Nakhlas), A. Kovner, and L. Kupernik). These texts,

contrary to their declared goal, also helped to formulate a Jewish national project. *Nelli Shulman* (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel), in her article *Jews as “the Other” in a Time of Change: The Jewish Theme in S. M. Stepniak-Kravchinsky’s Novel Andrei Kozhukhov*, investigates the portrayal of Jews in this novel. The novel portrays the Jews as important participants in transformations associated with the time of change and even as a symbol of broader social transformation. *Victoria Mochalova* (Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS; Sefer Center, Moscow), in her article *The Jewish Layman in the Whirlwind of Global Change*, analyzes works by Jewish writers from the 1920s. These include the novel *Ford* (1927) by Yuly Berzin, the novel *Minus Six* (1928) by Matvei Roizman, and the satirical novella *The Stormy Life of Lazik Roitshvanets* (1928) by Ilya Ehrenburg – all dedicated to the fate of Jewish characters swept up by a time of historical change. *Irina Adel’geim* (Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS, Moscow), in her article “*Maybe This Is My Story...: Post-Settlement Trauma in Polish Post-Socialist Prose*,” focuses on ways in which the works of A. Jurewicz, A. Zagajewski, S. Chwin, P. Huelle, A. D. Liskovacki, I. Iwasiów, B. Helbig, I. Bator, and Z. Orszyn, embody experiences associated with the theme of the Recovered Territories. The depiction of the Recovered Territories in the 1990s as an inherited palimpsest read with tender nostalgia gives way in the 2000s to the exploration of trauma and the indestructibility of memory, the silencing of which leads to a trauma inherited by subsequent generations.

The volume’s linguistic section deals with ethno-linguistic processes of change in a variety of social and political contexts. *Maria Yasinskaya* (Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS, Moscow), in her article *The Italianization of Slovenes in Italy during the Fascist Period and its Reflection in their Language, Culture, and Identity (Based on Field Recordings)*, analyzes narratives collected from the Slovene ethnic minority in Italy during expeditions conducted over the period from 2018 to 2022. These narratives detail the methods of Italianization, punishments for using the Slovene language, and Slovenes’ attempts to preserve their identity. *Gleb Pilipenko* (Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS, Moscow), in his article *Military Dictatorships in Latin American Countries and their Impact on the Linguistic Situation of East Slavic Immigrant Communities (Based on Informants’ Testimonies)*, draws on his own field research conducted between 2015 and 2024. The article examines the testimonies of members of immigrant communities (Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Yugoslavs) regarding

the period of military dictatorship in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil during the 1970s–1980s and its impact on the linguistic situation of the Slavic communities.

The next block of articles deals with the crises at the “time of change” on geographical and historical borderlands. *Siarhei Hruntou* (Center for the Study of Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk), in his article “*All the Hearses Are Completely Broken*”: *The Funeral Crisis of 1918–1922 in Vitebsk and its Confessional Aspects*, focuses on a little-studied aspect of funeral industry during this period. The impact of the crisis on the city’s Christian and Jewish cemeteries was uneven, with Jewish cemeteries generally adapting more quickly to new conditions. However, in the 1920s–1930s, irreversible developments in the city’s funeral infrastructure led to the liquidation of many city cemeteries, including Jewish ones, for which new authorities could not provide proper upkeep. *Olga Belova* (Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS, Moscow), in her article “*Turbulent Times*”: *The Events of the 1920s–1930s in the Western Region in the Texts of Oral History*, uses the analysis of materials from the State Archive of Contemporary History of the Smolensk Region to demonstrate popular sentiment in connection with the government’s anti-religious policy, the everyday hardships of the first Soviet years, changes in power structures, and the political events of that turbulent time. *Semen Padalko* (St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg), in his article *The Status of Rabbis in Late Soviet Jewish Communities: Institutional Challenges and Adaptation Strategies*, draws on archival, memoir, and field materials to examine the status of the rabbi in USSR in the 1970s–1980s. The status is considered both from the perspective of Soviet officials and their attitude to the problem of the shortage of Jewish clergy, and from the perspective of members of formal and informal Jewish religious communities.

The book concludes with the section on the study of crises and turning points from the perspectives of anthropology, folkloristics, and oral history, with special focus on the sub-ethnic group of Mountain Jews. *Svetlana Amosova* (Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS, Moscow) and *Elena Fomenko* (Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center, Moscow), in their article *The Agency and Self-Presentation of Mountain Jewish Women and the Migrations of the 1990s–2000s (The Case of the Pyatigorsk Community)* examine relationships between socio-economic processes within a Mountain Jewish community in the state of active migration (the disap-

pearance of the community in Grozny, the decline of Jewish population in Derbent and Buynaksk, and the growth of a new community in Pyatigorsk) and the agency of women from these communities, as well as these women's self-perception. The study is based on field materials recorded in Pyatigorsk between 2022 and 2024. *Vladimir Kolesov* (Independent Researcher, Krasnodar), in his article *From Tanners and Barter Traders to Suppliers and Tsekhoviks and, eventually, to "Fur Craft Masters": Transformations in the Economic Activities of the Mountain Jews of the North Caucasus in the 19th–20th Centuries*, demonstrates how Mountain Jewish settlers adapted to socio-economic and political changes in the country during the early and late Soviet years.

Like previous publications in the series, the present publication features a large volume of field and archival materials made available to a wider academic audience for the first time. The editors hope that this latest release in the series that has already gained popularity among specialists and established its own dedicated audience will attract interest from a broad range of researchers who work in the fields of Slavic and Jewish studies.

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