

Call For Papers - The Litvak Diaspora

University of Cape Town, 3-5 July 2023

Litvaks formed a significant share of Jewish emigrants from eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and an early majority among eastern European Jews in many towns and cities in their countries of settlement. This conference focuses on these migrants and their legacies, seeking to understand whether those who considered themselves Lithuanian Jews - by their dialect, political affiliations, intellectual and religious orientation, or geographical origin - produced distinct migratory and settlement patterns.

Our focus is both on the dynamics of emigration (regional selectivity, the role of networks, chain migration and onward movement, the interplay between the diaspora and places of origin, the creation of new Litvak centres, the role of immigration in shaping Litvak identity), and on the impact these immigrants had on the places where they settled.

Were people more likely to leave this region and, if so, why? What, if anything, was distinctive about these Litvak migrants, the cultural baggage they carried with them, and the communities that they built? How do we define Litvak identity given that the boundaries of Lite changed across time: from the historical territory of the Great Duchy of Lithuania to a narrower Lite distinct from Raysn (Belarus) in the 19th century, to ethnic Lithuania in the 20th century? How did Litvak migrants shape Jewish life, thought, and institutions in the places across the globe in which they clustered? What were the relations between Lithuanian Jews and other immigrants from these same regions, between Jewish immigrants and non-Jewish immigrants, and with their non-Jewish neighbours in the places they settled? And how did they represent their migrant experience or Jewish-Lithuanian identity in art, films, literature, museum or ego-documents?

The conference is organised by The Kaplan Center at the University of Cape Town and the Parkes Institute at the University of Southampton. It will be held at the **University of Cape Town on 3-5 July 2023**. Accommodation for four nights and catering will be provided; participants will be responsible for covering the cost of their transportation to and from Cape Town. Some funding will be provided toward the travel costs of junior scholars.

Please send one-page proposals and a short bio to kc@uct.ac.za by 30 November 2022.

Organising committee:

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