

Training of Teachers for Jewish Elementary Schools in Lithuania, 1919–1940

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Abstract. The article sets out to investigate the training of teachers for Jewish elementary schools in Lithuania between 1919 and 1940. It analyses the training of teachers for the schools of three educational trends, which were established by the Zionist education society Tarbut, the religious society Yavne and the Jewish Cultural League. The article reveals the development of teacher training from summer courses to long-term courses for teachers and the seminary.

Keywords: Jews, elementary school, Lithuania, education, Tarbut, Yavne, Jewish Cultural League.

Anotacija. Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas mokytojų rengimas žydų trijų ugdymo krypčių pradžios mokykloms Lietuvoje 1919–1940 m. Šias mokyklas steigė sionistinė švietimo draugija „Tarbut“, religinės krypties draugija „Javne“ ir draugija „Žydų kultūrinė lyga“. Atskleidžiama mokytojų rengimo vasaros kursuose, mokytojų ilgalaikiuose kursuose ir seminarijoje raida.

Esminiai žodžiai: žydai, pradžios mokykla, Lietuva, švietimas, „Tarbut“, „Javne“, „Žydų kultūrinė lyga“.

Introduction

In the aftermath of World War I, the schools of various types, predominantly elementary schools, were founded in Lithuania. The number of Jewish elementary schools was growing every year. Like the schools of Lithuanians and other national minorities, Jewish schools were gradually subjected to increasing regulation. As the number of schools was

growing, the issue of teachers became relevant as well. A part of Jewish teachers of the elderly generation had acquired pedagogical education in the universities of tsarist Russia and other European universities or educational establishments. Whereas the demand for qualified teachers was continuously growing, teacher training had to be provided in Lithuania as well. The Lithuanian Jewish community was not homogeneous – there were two languages (Hebrew and Yiddish), different ideologies and diverging views towards the purpose of schools. Consequently, the training of teachers for Jewish elementary schools became a more complex problem compared to teacher training for Lithuanian schools. The above factor determined the relevance of the research.

Research relevance lies in the attempt to investigate the training of teachers for Jewish elementary schools of different educational trends and to identify the objectives of different ideological movements within the Jewish national minority as well as the representatives of the Lithuanian government and their efforts in training teachers for Jewish elementary schools. The article seeks to reveal the diverging and coinciding objectives of the government and Jewish communities as regards the training of teachers. Once we shed light on the aspect of teacher training, we can get a more complete picture of Jewish education and the situation of the Jewish national minority in the Republic of Lithuania.

Research object is the training of teachers for Jewish elementary schools in Lithuania.

Chronological limits cover the period from 1919 to 1940. The research starts from 1919, because the first training course for Jewish teachers was organised after the restoration of Lithuania's independence in the summer of 1919. The study extends until 1940, i.e. Lithuania's occupation.

Historiographical review. Teacher training for Jewish schools in the First Republic of Lithuania has until now been little studied. Grigorijus Smoliakovas, a journalist of the newspaper *Tėvynės šviesa*, published an article on Jewish education as far back as 1989; he mentions the teachers' seminary in Telšiai and the courses for teachers organised by the Tarbut society and the Jewish Cultural League¹. Benediktas Šetkus' article published in the newspaper of the Lithuanian Jewish Cultural Society *Lietuvos Jeruzalė* in 1991 provided more in-depth information on the Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary and the courses organised by Tarbut and the Jewish Cultural League². The book *Lietuvos žydų kelias. Nuo XIV amžiaus iki XX a. pabaigos* (*The Path of the Jews of Lithuania. From the 14th Century to the End of the 20th Century*) by historian Solomon Atamuk covers the Jewish education and culture during the period of independence but limits with a single sentence as regards teacher training: "All three school systems had teacher training courses."³

¹ SMOLIAKOVAS, Grigorijus. Žydų švietimas Lietuvos Respublikoje 1918–1940 m. *Tėvynės šviesa*, 1989, rugsėjo 29, Nr. 78.

² ŠETKUS, Benediktas. Mokytojai žydų mokykloms (1919–1940). *Lietuvos Jeruzalė*, 1991, sausis, Nr. 1 (15).

³ ATAMUKAS, Solomonas. *Lietuvos žydų kelias. Nuo XIV amžiaus iki XX a. pabaigos*. Vilnius: Alma littera, 2001, p. 149.

In the historical study *Lietuvos žydai (Lithuanian Jews)* published in 2012 Mordechai Zalkin elaborates on the differences of Jewish schools in Lithuania. The author concludes that the training of teachers for Tarbut and Yavne schools was “the weak link”, because teachers with proper training were constantly lacking⁴. However, he did not address the issue of teacher training. In the above book historian Saulius Kaubrys briefly covers the training of Jewish teachers. He points out that the Tarbut society and the Cultural League (the author refers to it as Kultur Lige) organised two-year courses for teachers. Slightly more facts are provided on Telšiai Yavne Teachers’ Seminary, which, according to the author, was “one of the most modest in Lithuania”⁵ compared to other teachers’ seminaries. Hence, the topic of training of teachers for Jewish elementary schools has not been thoroughly studied.

The aim of the research is to study and summarise the system of the training of teachers for Lithuanian Jewish elementary schools in the period 1919–1940 based on archival material.

Research objectives:

First, to explore the training of teachers for Jewish elementary schools during summer courses.

Second, to analyse the training of teachers for secular elementary schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction sponsored by the Tarbut society.

Third, to examine the training of teachers for religious elementary schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction supported by the Yavne society.

Fourth, to describe the training of teachers for the elementary schools of the Jewish Cultural League with Yiddish as the language of instruction.

Research methods. The qualitative study relied on theoretical research methods – analysis and synthesis⁶. The collected historical facts were described by means of the narrative (descriptive) method. In order to reveal the training of Jewish teachers for the schools of three educational trends, the study used the comparative historical method. Each system of the training of Jewish teachers for elementary schools was described on the basis of the chronological method, as it enhances the understanding of historical development covering the two decades of independence. In order to distinguish the essential features describing the system of teacher training, the method of abstraction was applied.

Review of sources. The research was carried out on the basis of the documents kept at the Fund of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Lithuania (F. 391) of the Lithuanian Central State Archives. The applications and annual reports of the societies

⁴ ZALKIN, Mordechai. Žydų mokyklų idėjinė diferenciacija. Iš: *Lietuvos žydai. Istorinė studija*. Sudarė V. Sirutavičius, D. Staliūnas, J. Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2012, p. 365.

⁵ KAUBRYS, Saulius. Žydų mokyklų tinklas: kiekybinių pokyčių charakteristikos. Iš: *Lietuvos žydai. Istorinė studija*. Sudarė V. Sirutavičius, D. Staliūnas, J. Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2012, p. 382–385.

⁶ Theoretical research methods [accessed 12 April 2018]. Available from: <<http://www.mokslomedis.lt/teoriniai-tyrimu-metodai>>.

Tarbut, Yavne and the Jewish Cultural League, etc., which sponsored the courses for Jewish teachers, to the Ministry of Education and the orders and instructions from the Ministry of Education to the aforementioned societies account for the major part of these documents. Documents prepared in the course of information exchange between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Jewish Affairs were used in the article. The study also referred to the material of correspondence between the heads of teacher training courses and the seminary and the Department of Elementary Schools under the Ministry of Education, the reports on the institutions for the training of Jewish teachers prepared by the authorised representatives or inspectors of the Ministry of Education. Documents kept at the Fund of the Jewish Culture and Education Society Tarbut (F. 552) were also examined. The author also refers to the *Acts of the Lithuanian Constituent Assembly* and the periodicals of that time, namely *Lietuvos aidas* and the Jewish newspaper in Lithuanian *Apžvalga*.

Diversity of Jewish schools by educational trend

The training of teachers for Lithuanian Jewish elementary schools was a more complex task than their training for Lithuanian or, for instance, Polish schools. Due to the long-established tradition of two languages – Hebrew and Yiddish – and the diverging views, the schools of three educational trends formed in the Jewish culture. Religious schools close to a traditional Jewish school, the so called “Cheder”, with Hebrew as the language of instruction were one of them. Secular elementary schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction comprised the second trend. Secular schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction made up the third educational trend⁷.

After graduating from the elementary school of any educational trend, pupils were willing to continue education in the progymnasiums or gymnasiums of the same trend. In this way, three networks of Jewish schools, with each expressing the expectations of a certain segment of the Jewish community, formed and functioned throughout the period of independence in Lithuania.

The school of religious type expressed the interests of those Jewish residents who most of all adhered to the lifestyle of the past. They were against secular education and tried to maintain “the spirit of dogmatic religion”⁸ in schools. The advocates of religious schools explained the necessity of such schools by the long-established belief that the duty of Jewish parents was to educate their children in the spirit of religion. They were convinced that the study of the Talmud, the views of Jewish philosophers and prophets and Jewish literature were the subjects of general type. As the schools of other trends did

⁷ Žydų bendruomenės atstovų konferencija Kaune. *Lietuva*, 1919, rugpjūčio 8.

⁸ 29 05 1929 Report of the Central Committee of the Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 552, ap. 2, b. 80, l. 28.

not provide sufficient knowledge of this type, they favoured the establishment of such schools where both the subjects of general education were taught and the knowledge about Judaism was provided⁹.

The advocates of the secular Jewish school with Hebrew as the language of instruction stated that their school “by providing religious and national education, also maintains the most beautiful ethnical principles of the nation’s old and new culture and adheres to the latest requirements of the science of pedagogy and the reality of life”¹⁰. The schools of this trend prevailed among Jewish schools.

The Jewish school with Yiddish as the language of instruction developed during the years of World War I. In around the 15th century, at the time of emigration of the Jews from Germany, Yiddish spread in Poland and later in Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus. Owing to Russification, it was banned to use Yiddish as the language of instruction in the Russian Empire. At the time of occupation by Kaiser Germany and in the aftermath of World War I, the use of Yiddish was not in any way restricted and widely spread in the regions of the former Russian Empire and elsewhere in the world¹¹.

The abovementioned schools of three educational trends were represented by education societies. After Lithuania restored its independence, Ceiri Isroel was the society which represented religious schools. The society promoted religious matters among the Jewish youth, encouraging them to follow the Torah and the old traditions in their life. In 1922, the schools supported by this society fell under the auspices of the central organisation of Jewish schools, education and culture (in short – the Jewish school centre) known as Yavne. As laid down in its bylaws, the society was a circle of Jewish spiritual leaders, scientists, teachers, cultural figures and parents acting for the sake of Jewish children and Jewish culture. The name “Yavne” derives from the ancient scientific centre in Palestine, which eventually became a symbol of Jewish culture¹².

The expectations of secular schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction were expressed by the society Tarbut (“Education”). It was a part of the Lithuanian Zionist Society and for a certain period was known as the School Education Department of the Lithuanian Zionist Society Tarbut¹³. Later on, it was known as the Lithuanian Jewish Education and Culture Society. The teacher network under the umbrella of Tarbut favoured the application of numerous and versatile extracurricular activities which were predominantly of Zionist type. Due to the above reason, the schools of this type served

⁹ 20 05 1931 Report of the Central Committee of the Yavne Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 2, b. 605, l. 69.

¹⁰ 29 05 1929 Report of the Central Committee of the Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 552, ap. 2, b. 80, l. 28.

¹¹ 15 04 1930 Memorandum of the Board and the Parents’ Committee of Ukmergė Jewish Real Gymnasium to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 2, b. 1767, l. 118–119.

¹² Bylaws of the Central Organisation of Jewish Schools, Education and Culture Yavne in Lithuania. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 2, b. 2227, l. 82.

¹³ Bylaws of the Lithuanian Zionist Society. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 103.

as the grounds for the development of ideological worldviews for the future figures of the local Zionist movement¹⁴.

The Cultural League was a Jewish cultural society established in March 1919. It united all Lithuanian Jewish secular schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction. The Jewish Cultural League asserted that the schools under its auspices mostly served the interests of Jewish workers¹⁵. The abovementioned society did not limit with cultural activities and also engaged in politics associated with communist activities. Due to this reason, the society's activities were banned and its leader Abramson was arrested in 1924. In 1926, he departed to Germany and later settled in the Soviet Union¹⁶. The educational activities commenced by the Jewish Cultural League were continued by other societies, namely the Jewish Education Society, the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child and the Jewish Knowledge Lovers Society.

It is obvious that there was no single approach in the Jewish society as to what the Jewish school actually had to be and what subjects had to be taught by it. The education societies Yavne, Tarbut and the Jewish Cultural League sought to highlight their superiority over other societies. Such behaviour used to lead to mutual disputes, had negative effects on the Jews themselves and caused trouble to the state leaders of education.

Out of the three educational trends, Tarbut elementary schools of Zionist type prevailed among them. According to Max Soloveitchik, Minister for Jewish Affairs, out of 120 Jewish elementary schools, which functioned in 1921, excluding private schools, "nearly 30 per cent of schools belong to one of those trends (religious schools – author's note); 40 or 50 per cent of schools fall to the second trend (i.e. Tarbut schools – author's note) and nearly 20 per cent of schools represent the third trend (i.e. with Yiddish as the language of instruction – author's note)"¹⁷. Israeli historian Dov Levin points out that in the school year 1920–1921, there were 46 Tarbut type Jewish elementary schools, 30 Yavne type Orthodox schools and 16 schools of the Cultural League, i.e. with Yiddish as the language of instruction¹⁸. In 1928, there were 107 state-sponsored Jewish elementary schools in Lithuania, of which 86 schools were Tarbut type schools¹⁹. They accounted for roughly 80 per cent of all Jewish elementary schools.

Whereas the Jewish schools of three educational trends functioned in Lithuania, it was resolved to train teachers for each type of school separately. Though the curriculum

¹⁴ ZALKIN, Mordechai. Žydų mokyklų idėjinė diferenciacija. Iš: *Lietuvos žydai. Istorinė studija*. Sudarė V. Sirutavičius, D. Staliūnas, J. Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2012, p. 360.

¹⁵ 11 02 1921 Report of the Jewish Cultural League to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1763, l. 154.

¹⁶ Kaip buvo įtraukta Kultūr-Lyga į komunistų darbą. *Lietuvos aidas*, 1928, vasario 6 d.

¹⁷ 1921 11 22 I sesijos 142 posėdis. *Steigiamojo Seimo darbai*. Kaunas, 1920–1922, p. 13.

¹⁸ LEVIN, Dov. Lithuania. In: *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* [accessed 12 March 2018]. Available from: <<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Lithuania>>.

¹⁹ FELDSTEIN, Cemach. Jewish School in Independent Lithuania. *Idiše Štime [Jewish Voice]*, 15 February 1928 [translated by teacher Potašnikas]. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2138, l. 30.

of Tarbut and Yavne schools was similar and there were similarities in worldviews (in particular as regards the status of Hebrew), the relationship with religion was the matter of controversy.

Summer courses

During the first years of existence of independent Lithuania several dozens of Jewish elementary schools were established and included in the network of public schools. In May 1919, their number reached 49²⁰. Individuals were admitted to the position of teachers who did not have the required educational background. Therefore, on 1 July 1919, the Ministry of Education organised a 10-week course for Jewish teachers working in state-funded schools. Those teachers were exempted from the course who already had a recognised teacher's diploma and were sufficiently fluent in Lithuanian. Those who had a teacher's diploma but were not fluent in Lithuanian were permitted to learn Lithuanian for six months independently and pass the examination afterwards. In such a case, their attendance in the summer course was not required²¹.

Accommodations in Kaunas were required by the teachers coming from the provinces. It was the concern of the Department of Elementary Schools under the Ministry of Education, which attempted to supply the teachers of Jewish elementary schools with bread, firewood and straw at a lower price²², tried to get some beds for teachers from the Committee of the Board of the Lithuanian War Relief Society²³ and applied to the governor of the city and county of Kaunas for the permit for the attendants to stay in Kaunas during the course²⁴.

Seventy-four individuals, mostly between 20 and 30 years old, attended the course. Pedagogy and Lithuanian were mandatory; other subjects included psychology, arithmetic methodology, natural sciences, Yiddish language and literature, Jewish demography, school hygiene, gymnastics, singing, drawing, Hebrew. Additional lectures were also delivered to attendants, of which one was organised by Minister for Jewish Affairs Max

²⁰ Pradedamųjų mokyklų ir mokytojų skaičius baigiantis 1918/19 m. m. apie gegužės pabaigą. *Švietimo darbas*, 1920, Nr. 5, p. 18–19.

²¹ 26 06 1919 Letter of Director of the Department of Elementary Education under the Ministry of Education Vokietaitis to Education-Culture Commissions and instructors of elementary schools. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1, l. 128.

²² 09 07 1919 Letter of the Department of Elementary Education to the Ministry of Supply and Catering. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1950, l. 22.

²³ 15 07 1919 Letter of the Department of Elementary Education to the Committee of the Board of the Lithuanian War Relief Society. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1950, l. 21.

²⁴ 16 07 1919 Letter of the Department of Elementary Education to the Governor of Kaunas City and County. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1950, l. 19.

Soloveitchik; tours were also held. The attendants were issued certificates of attendance. Due to the short duration of the course, no examinations were taken²⁵.

Between 10 June and 10 September 1919, the course for elementary school teachers who had no knowledge of Lithuanian was organised in Kaunas. The attendance was mandatory. Only those Jewish teachers who had an individual course at the same time were exempted from the course²⁶.

The surviving documents show that at the start of 1920, the Ministry of Education set up a commission to evaluate how fluent the course attendants were in Lithuanian. It was concluded after the review of written assignments that they were applied far lower requirements compared to the requirements applied by the Ministry of Education for the acquisition of the rights of a non-Lithuanian school junior teacher in the Lithuanian language program. According to the commission, only two persons had the required knowledge of Lithuanian. The knowledge of all other attendants failed to meet the requirements in all subjects²⁷.

It should be noted that most of the Jewish teachers working in Jewish elementary schools at that time had been assigned to the position of teachers by the Jewish community or the school parents' council rather than by public authorities²⁸. It is little likely that the appointment of teachers was based on any common criteria showing the individual's knowledge of subjects and pedagogical skills. However, in the spring of 1921, when the summer course was about to start again, the Department of Elementary Education instructed to invite both the persons already working as teachers as well as those willing to work in the position of teachers who had the educational background of at least four gymnasium classes²⁹. Such a decision shows that elementary school teachers were already required to have a certain educational background.

On 23 June 1921, a six-week summer course in Kaunas, the premises of the Jewish Real Gymnasium, began. The course enrolled 90 teachers: 71 from the provinces and 19 from Kaunas. Whereas the Jewish National Council allocated more funds, the people not included in the teachers' list were also invited to the course: there were 72 of them. Hence, 162 individuals in total attended the course³⁰.

A large number of individuals took the course. Therefore, two groups were formed taking into account the language of instruction – the first group was comprised of the

²⁵ Report on Jewish teacher courses in Kaunas. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1950, l. 2.

²⁶ 02 06 1919 Notification of the Department of Elementary Education to instructors. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1, l. 124.

²⁷ 30 01 1921 Minutes No. 9. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1970, l. 1.

²⁸ 23 05 1921 Report of the School Department under the Ministry for Jewish Affairs to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1763, l. 149.

²⁹ 31 05 1921 Letter of the Department of Elementary Education to the Minister for Jewish Affairs. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1763, l. 148.

³⁰ Report on the summer course for Jewish teachers of 1921 drawn up by the head of the course Yaacov Lubman Chaviv. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1992, l. 5.

teachers working in the schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction and the second group was made of teachers instructing in Yiddish. The course attendants had a reading room with books in Hebrew and Yiddish, the personal books on the topics of pedagogy in German which belonged to Yaacov Lubman, the head of the course, as well as teaching aids. Whereas it turned out that a part of the teachers were ready to take examinations for the junior teacher's qualification in certain subjects, they were examined. The following examinations were passed: 43 teachers passed the examination in arithmetic, 34 teachers in geometry, 7 teachers in Lithuanian (oral), 37 teachers in geometry³¹. It can be noted that Lithuanian was the most difficult subject for Jewish teachers at that time.

In the summer of 1921, the teachers of some Jewish elementary schools went to Vienna (Austria) where the Jewish Institute for Youth Research and Education delivered the course for the Jewish teachers from across the globe. Pedagogy, psychology, sociology, etc. were taught in the course; it introduced the activities of European and US schools³². The following Jewish elementary school teachers attended the course: Zavel Zaks from Vilkija, Benzion Lechem from Čekiškė, Abraham Charit from Ežerėnai (Zarasai), Akiba Wonchocker from Kelmė, Sonya Aranovich from Ukmergė and Frade Alpert from Kaunas³³.

The summer course was also held in Kaunas in 1922. The course hosted by the Jewish gymnasium was attended by 80 teachers – 9 from Kaunas and 71 from the provinces. There were also 40 unregistered teachers. The attendants were divided into two groups. The first group was made of teachers who had passed examinations and were awarded the junior teacher's qualification in 1921; the second group was comprised of those teachers who had not passed the examination. The course was held in Hebrew and Yiddish. Lectures were delivered by professors invited from Berlin and Leipzig; handouts of lectures were prepared, printed and distributed to the attendants³⁴. The Ministry of Education spent 22,469 German ostmarks for the maintenance of the course³⁵.

The so called "Jewish subjects" were taught in Jewish elementary schools, i.e. the language, Hebrew Bible and Jewish history³⁶. In 1921, the Ministry of Education together with the Ministry for Jewish Affairs resolved that the Ministry for Jewish Affairs would decide about which individuals might teach those subjects and would provide their list to the Ministry of Education in order to issue an authorisation for them to work in school.

³¹ Report on the summer course for Jewish teachers of 1921 drawn up by the head of the course Yaacov Lubman Chaviv. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1992, l. 5–15.

³² Report of the School Department under the Ministry for Jewish Affairs to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1763, l. 141.

³³ 08 07 1921 Report of the Department of Elementary Education to the Ministry for Jewish Affairs. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1763, l. 134.

³⁴ Report on the activities of the summer course for Jewish teachers of 1922. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 4–5.

³⁵ 09 08 1922 Notification of Minister of Education Juodakis to the Ministry for Jewish Affairs. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 16.

³⁶ 07 09 1923 Report of the Ministry for Jewish Affairs to the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2026, l. 63.

Such individuals were authorised to work as teachers on a temporary basis; however, eventually, they had to acquire the teacher's qualification³⁷.

The Ministry for Jewish Affairs organised the summer course from 1 July to 15 August 1923, which took place in the Jewish Real Gymnasium. The Ministry of Education promised its financial support³⁸. In order to make sure how the course was actually held, the Ministry of Education sent its inspector. A number of shortcomings were established: lecturers were continuously late; discipline and order were lacking; finally, not all attendants were actually present in the course: there must have been 67 learners according to the list. As explained by the head of the course, 50 individuals attended the course, though only 21 attendants were actually found by the inspector from the Ministry of Education³⁹. Besides, the Ministry of Education requested the history of Lithuania and geography to be taught in Lithuanian, though this requirement was not fulfilled. Due to the above reasons, the Ministry of Education refused to allocate the promised funds for the course organisers⁴⁰.

Summer courses were short-term, and it was therefore not possible to convey sufficient subject and pedagogical knowledge. Such a situation necessitated the establishment of long-term courses and teachers' seminaries. After they were established, the significance of summer courses reduced, though they were still organised from time to time. For instance, from 10 July to 10 August 1930 the Yavne society organised the course in Palanga. The purpose of the course was to enhance the knowledge of elementary school teachers in pedagogy and methodology "in the light of the latest teaching methods"⁴¹. Nine lecturers (two from abroad – Dr. Leo Deutschlander from Vienna and Rabbi Dr. Joseph Carlebach from Altona, Germany) provided training; the course was attended by 39 teachers. Lectures and discussions attended by rabbis used to take place on Saturdays. Various pedagogical and religious topics were discussed. Carrying torches, the learners participated in the ceremony to honour the image of Vytautas the Great⁴².

In the summer of 1932, the Yavne society organised the handicraft, physical education and pedagogical course in Palanga, which was taken by 29 Jewish teachers. Under the

³⁷ 28 08 1922 Report of the Ministry for Jewish Affairs to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2026, l. 64.

³⁸ 1923 [the date is illegible] Letter of the Department of Elementary Education to the School Division of the Ministry for Jewish Affairs. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2034, l. 290.

³⁹ [Undated] Report of the Department of Elementary Education to the Ministry for Jewish Affairs. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2034, l. 261.

⁴⁰ 05 08 1923 Report of the Department of Elementary Education to the Minister for Jewish Affairs. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2034, l. 259.

⁴¹ Report on the summer course on pedagogical and general subjects held by the Yavne education society in Palanga from 10 July to 10 August 1930, the Year of Vytautas the Great. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2145, l. 9.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

guidance of Dr. Carlebach, sightseeing tours in Klaipėda, the port of Šventoji and Nida were organised. The head of the course was Dr. Chiena Levitan-Shershevski⁴³.

In the summer of 1931, the Tarbut society organised the course for Jewish elementary school teachers in Palanga. The purpose of the course was to enhance the knowledge of teachers in natural sciences, to develop drawing skills and to pay attention to national upbringing. Abraham Kisin had to act as the head of the course. However, only eight teachers arrived at the course and it was decided to cancel it⁴⁴.

From 10 July to 10 August 1934, the Tarbut society delivered the course to elementary school teachers in Kulautuva, a resort town back then. The course was attended by 27 teachers, who were mostly instructed in the fields of agriculture, gardening and farming. Fifteen hours per week were given for this topic; 9 hours were dedicated to physical education; 3 hours were given to pedagogy and 2 hours were assigned to Hebrew methodology. The attendants visited minor farms, Pavilkija manor and carried out practical work in agriculture⁴⁵. The course was led by agronomist Shapiro.

In 1935, the Tarbut society again held the course for Jewish elementary school teachers in Palanga which was intended to develop drawing and calligraphy skills. Ilja Beiles was assigned to act as the head of the course⁴⁶. The aforementioned society also held the course from 5 July to 5 August 1937 in Palanga with a focus on natural sciences and their teaching methodology⁴⁷. The organisers expected the attendance of up to 30 teachers but only 11 teachers were actually present in the course⁴⁸.

In summary, the summer courses for Jewish elementary school teachers had greater significance during the first years of Lithuania's existence. During them teachers improved their qualification; those who were prepared had a chance to pass examinations and to acquire the rights of a junior teacher. After long-term courses were introduced, the role of summer courses reduced. Nevertheless, they were still organised during a later period, though they did not always receive the required attention from the teachers seeking professional development.

⁴³ Report on the summer course on handicraft, physical education and pedagogy organised by the Jewish education society Yavne in Palanga from 15 July to 15 August 1932. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2160, l. 8–9.

⁴⁴ 14 07 1931 Kisin's report to the 1st Department of the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2152, l. 10.

⁴⁵ Report on the pedagogical course for Jewish elementary school teachers organised by the Lithuanian Tarbut society from 10 July to 10 August 1934 in the resort town of Kulautuva. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2163, l. 14.

⁴⁶ 19 06 1935 Notification of the 1st Department of the Ministry of Education to the Central Board of the Lithuanian Tarbut society. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2165, l. 141.

⁴⁷ 09 06 1937 Letter of the Central Board of the Lithuanian Tarbut society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 2829, l. 4.

⁴⁸ List of Jewish elementary school teachers who attended the course on natural sciences organised by the Tarbut society in Palanga during the summer vacation of 1937. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2829, l. 2.

Teacher training for the elementary schools of the Tarbut society

As mentioned before, the schools represented by the Tarbut society accounted for the major part of all the Jewish elementary schools in Lithuania. The Tarbut society procrastinated the establishment of long-term teacher training courses for a certain period of time, because the issue of establishing a state seminary for Jewish teachers was on the agenda of the Constituent Assembly. The draft law on the seminary for Jewish teachers drawn up in 1922 provided for the training of the teachers of both genders for Jewish elementary schools in Lithuania⁴⁹. The Ministry of Education had to be the founder of the seminary, whereas the candidacy for the director's position had to be proposed by the Ministry for Jewish Affairs. The proposed candidate had to be approved by the Ministry of Education. The would-be seminary was expected to have three divisions: the first division had to train teachers for the Jewish elementary schools of religious type; the second division had to provide training for the teachers of secular schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction, whereas the third division was to prepare teachers for secular schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction⁵⁰.

The establishment of the abovementioned seminary triggered fierce discussions in the Constituent Assembly. In the name of all Social Democrats, Vincas Čepinskis was against the religious division of the seminary. According to him, in religious schools “12–14 year-old children are taught the subjects from the so called matrimonial arrangements focusing on disgusting gender related matters which are addressed in great detail. It is unacceptable from the pedagogical perspective. Also, the method of instruction in those schools is mostly based on the learning of texts by heart. The schools apply physical penalties to achieve one or another goal. It is not permissible”⁵¹, Antanas Tamošaitis, a member of the Peasant Union, was also against the introduction of three divisions. According to him, such a situation “will divide Jewish teachers and may even lead to fighting against each other”⁵².

Whereas the issue of establishment of the state seminary for Jewish teachers stalled in the Constituent Assembly, the Tarbut society took the initiative to establish long-term courses. On 9 May 1922, its Central Committee applied to the Ministry of Education requesting to issue an authorisation for the establishment of the courses for Jewish teachers. Two-year courses were planned for the individuals who did not have pedagogical experience and one-year courses were to be organised for those who already had expe-

⁴⁹ 1922 01 25 I sesijos 163 posėdis. *Steigiamojo Seimo darbai*. Kaunas, 1920–1922, p. 33.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

rience as teachers⁵³. It was planned to admit male and female youth from 17 years old with the educational background of four gymnasium classes to the courses. The courses had to focus on the following subjects: Hebrew Bible, Hebrew language and literature, Lithuanian, history of Jews, Lithuania and the world, mathematics, natural sciences, geography, psychology, pedagogy, singing, gymnastics, drawing, and handicraft. Hebrew had to be used as the language of instruction. Shalom Yonah Charna, former director of the Grodno Teachers' Institute, was selected as the head of the courses⁵⁴. On 7 June 1922, the Ministry of Education issued an authorisation for the establishment of the courses; however, it declared that no financing was provided for the courses⁵⁵.

In the autumn of 1922, the course was attended by 42 individuals. On 17 October of the same year, the Tarbut society applied to the Ministry of Education with a request to reorganise the teacher courses into a teachers' seminary, because the "teacher courses cannot provide the required training, knowledge and pedagogical education for teachers"⁵⁶. However, Minister of Education Petras Juodakis refused to grant an authorisation⁵⁷.

At the end of 1922, Schneider, the head of Tarbut teacher courses, and Levin, the head of the Cultural League's teacher courses, applied to the Ministry of Education for financial support. They explained that the maintenance of the courses was expensive, and Jewish education societies did not have sufficient funds to cover all the costs⁵⁸. Director of the Department Vokietaitis replied that there was no opportunity to satisfy the request⁵⁹.

In 1924, the Tarbut society was planning to organise a one-year course for the individuals with gymnasium education, who would teach in elementary and secondary schools (i.e. progymnasiums). Whereas these individuals had already graduated from gymnasiums and were better prepared in the subject field, it was only planned to instruct them in pedagogy related subjects. It was desirable to award such rights for the course graduates which used to be granted for the graduates of teachers' seminaries⁶⁰. However, the Ministry of Education did not award such an authorisation on the grounds that "under the law, such a course will have to be organised under the auspices of the university"⁶¹.

⁵³ 09 05 1922 Application of Tarbut Central Committee in Lithuania to the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 106.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 106.

⁵⁵ 07 06 1922 Notification of the Department of Elementary Education to Tarbut Central Committee in Lithuania. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 86.

⁵⁶ 17 10 1922 Application of Tarbut Central Committee to the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 94.

⁵⁷ 15 11 1922 Notification of the Department of Elementary Education to Tarbut Central Committee. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 93.

⁵⁸ 21 12 1922 Application of the Head of Tarbut Teacher Courses Schneider and the Head of the Cultural League's Teacher Courses Levin to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 21.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁶⁰ 03 06 1924 Application of the Lithuanian Zionist Society Tarbut Division to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2058, l. 70.

⁶¹ 20 06 1924 Notification of the Adviser for Elementary Education Vokietaitis to the Board of the Lithuanian Zionist Society Tarbut Kaunas branch. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2058, l. 69.

In the autumn of 1923, the two-year Tarbut course for teachers had 20 students (only year 2 students) – 14 men and 6 women⁶². At the end of 1924, 28 students were enrolled in the course⁶³. At the start of 1925, when the course was only taken by the students of one year, 25 students (17 men and 8 women) were enrolled in it. At the end of 1925, when both the first and the second year students attended the course, it had 59 students in total⁶⁴.

Only year 2 students remained from the school year 1926–1927. The Tarbut society again applied to the Ministry of Education for an authorisation to establish a four-year teachers' seminary in place of the two-year courses starting from the school year 1926–1927. However, Minister of Education Čepinskis did not grant an authorisation on the grounds that there were no funds and that the amendment to the law on the teachers' seminary was underway⁶⁵. Several months later, i.e. on 7 January 1927, after the new Government and the Minister of Education took office, the Tarbut society repeatedly applied for an authorisation to establish the teachers' seminary. Minister of Education Leonas Bistras issued the following resolution: “To refuse in the absence of the necessary conditions as the issue is brought up prematurely”⁶⁶. In August the same year, the Tarbut society again requested for permission to open the teachers' seminary. It was motivated by the fact that the training provided in the courses was insufficient to prepare for the teacher's work; the time for learning specific Jewish subjects was lacking, etc. Minister of Education Konstantinas Šakenis agreed to the establishment of one-year pedagogical courses for the graduates of a high school⁶⁷. At that time, gymnasiums had the status of high schools.

In a few days, the Tarbut society asked Minister of Education Šakenis for an authorisation to establish two-year pedagogical courses for high school graduates. The necessity of longer courses was justified by the fact that Jewish teachers had to dedicate much time and be well versed in “ancient and modern Jewish literature, which is hardly possible to achieve in a high school; also, they have to pay much time to the subjects of natural sciences, which are taught in lower grades and the knowledge acquired by pupils in those subjects is very poor”⁶⁸. Dr. Raphael Rabinowitz was selected as the head of the courses; the Jewish Real Gymnasium was chosen as the venue of the courses. The minister satisfied

⁶² 31 10 1923 Composition of students in Kaunas Tarbut Jewish teacher course. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2011, l. 35–36.

⁶³ 09 12 1924 Report of the head of Kaunas Tarbut Jewish teacher course to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2058, l. 21.

⁶⁴ Report on the two-year Kaunas Tarbut Jewish teacher course, 1925. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2079, l. 2.

⁶⁵ 08 08 1926 Application of the Chairman of the Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2100, l. 165.

⁶⁶ 07 01 1927 Letter of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2100, l. 152.

⁶⁷ 09 08 1927 Letter of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2100, l. 93.

⁶⁸ 19 08 1927 Application of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2100, l. 83–84.

the application; however, he noted that the funds would be allocated for the maintenance of one-year students only if their number was sufficient⁶⁹.

The abovementioned two-year courses provided training for teachers of both elementary and secondary schools. To that end, the number of lessons for drawing was reduced by dedicating more lessons to Jewish history and world history⁷⁰. At the outset of 1929, 29 attendants were enrolled in the course – 19 men and 10 women. Eleven teachers worked in the course⁷¹.

The report prepared by Sluoksnaitis, the rapporteur of the Ministry of Education, elaborates on the situation of Tarbut teacher courses. In 1927, he paid a visit to the final examinations and presented certain facts and his opinion. According to him, there were 37 second-year students, of whom 35 students took examinations and 27 students successfully passed them. Sluoksnaitis writes: “I learnt during the examinations that the students were well versed in the history of Lithuanian language and literature, but they had read few Lithuanian books. Other subjects were properly instructed in the course, whereas the instruction of psychology, pedagogy, didactics, hygiene and mathematics was quite good. From the educational perspective, the course creates a far better impression compared to last year”⁷².

The impression which Sluoksnaitis received from the learning environment was not that good. The course would take place in the evening in the premises of the Jewish Real Gymnasium. The rapporteur’s conclusion was as follows: “The gymnasium’s apartment is indeed very dirty: the class corners are full of dirt; the desks are carved up and inked; the walls have chalk and pencil marks; some windows are broken; everything is covered with dust in the staff room. In my opinion, the youth, in particular would-be teachers, should not be taught in such premises”⁷³.

A number of young Jews from poor families attended the courses. In some years, it was intended to exempt about half of the students from the tuition fee⁷⁴. Due to this reason, the financial support provided by the Ministry of Education was important. The Ministry of Education dedicated a tidy sum for the courses: 15,800 litas in 1925⁷⁵, 19,353 litas in 1926⁷⁶, 12,505 litas in 1928⁷⁷. For the sake of comparison, it should be said that

⁶⁹ 19 08 1927 Application of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2100, l. 83–84.

⁷⁰ Report on the two-year Tarbut pedagogical course for 1929. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2142, l. 54.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² 30 07 1927 Report of Rapporteur Sluoksnaitis to the Adviser for Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2100, l. 87.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ 30 12 1929 Letter of the Central Committee of the Jewish Education and Culture Society Tarbut in Lithuania to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2148, l. 25.

⁷⁵ 13 02 1925 Notification of Adviser for Elementary Education Vokietaitis to the head of Tarbut teacher courses. *LCVA*, f. 552, ap. 1, b. 2, l. 9.

⁷⁶ Report on the two-year Kaunas Tarbut Jewish teacher course, 1926. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2100, l. 12.

⁷⁷ Report on the two-year Tarbut pedagogical course for 1928. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2828, l. 13

in 1928, 1,500 litas was collected from tuition fees and 4,607 litas was received from the Tarbut society⁷⁸.

During the first nine years, 138 individuals graduated from the Tarbut teacher courses. Out of the mentioned number, 106 persons worked as teachers in Tarbut type elementary and secondary schools in 1931. During the nine-year period, the Tarbut Central Committee received a request for 166 teachers from schools: in the school year 1925–1926, 14 teachers were requested; 21 teachers were required in the school year 1926–1927 and 32 teachers in the school year 1927–1928; 29 teachers were required in the school year 1928–1929; 39 teachers were needed in the school year 1929–1930; 31 teachers were requested in the school year 1930–1931⁷⁹.

The two-year pedagogical courses functioned until the end of the school year 1932–1933. They were closed because a sufficient number of teachers was already prepared for Jewish elementary schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction. Several years later, some teachers departed abroad; some teachers were appointed to newly opened school units; yet others changed their occupation altogether and left school. Due to this reason, in 1937, the Tarbut society applied to the Ministry of Education with a request to resume the courses from the beginning of the school year 1937–1938⁸⁰. However, Minister of Education Juozas Tonkūnas did not satisfy the request⁸¹.

In the spring of 1938, the Tarbut society repeatedly applied to the Minister of Education requesting to award an authorisation to establish a four-year teachers' seminary starting from the school year 1938–1939 and to maintain it at its own expense⁸². However, the positive answer was not received, because the leaders of the Ministry of Education were planning to train all teachers in the pedagogical institute founded in Klaipėda in 1935.

In 1936, Vice Minister of Education Kazimieras Masiliūnas asserted to the reporter of the Jewish newspaper *Apžvalga* that the Ministry of Education was not inclined to establish or subsidise separate institutes for Jewish teachers. In the view of the ministry, the common training platform for all teachers was required, and Jewish teachers had to be educated in state-run teachers' institutes. The establishment of a separate institute for Jewish teachers would pose a number of questions, the language of instruction – Hebrew or Yiddish – being one of them⁸³. Masiliūnas expressed the position of the Ministry of Education that “in principle, it has nothing against the establishment of special courses for the teachers of Jewish schools where the future teachers of Jewish schools would

⁷⁸ Report on the two-year Tarbut pedagogical course for 1928. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2828, l. 13

⁷⁹ 03 11 1931 Letter of Tarbut Central Committee to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2457, l. 234.

⁸⁰ 08 07 1937 Application of the Central Board of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2568, l. 107.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, l. 106.

⁸² 26 04 1938 Application of the Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 552, ap. 1, b. 50, l. 31.

⁸³ Žydų mokykloms reikiama mokytojų kadra parengs bendri valstybiniai mokytojų institutai. *Apžvalga*, 1936, balandžio 26.

complete an additional course in Jewish subjects in addition to the general state teachers' institutes"⁸⁴.

In order to encourage the teaching of specific Jewish subjects in the pedagogical institute established in Klaipėda, in 1938, the Tarbut society, delivered a memorandum to the minister of education requesting to open a separate Department of Hebrew Studies in the institute. It requested to hire two lecturers in the department who would teach Hebrew language and literature and other subjects to would-be teachers. One lecturer had to teach Hebrew to the individuals who already had the knowledge of Hebrew and the other to those who did not speak it⁸⁵. In 1938, the Ministry of Education instructed the leaders of Klaipėda Pedagogical Institute to prepare the programs of three subjects – Hebrew, Jewish history and Hebrew language methodology. The above subjects were intended for those persons who were planning on working in Jewish private and public schools. Final examinations in these subjects were also planned at the end of studies. In the spring of 1938, 30 Jewish students studied in the aforementioned institute⁸⁶.

After Vilnius Region was transferred to Lithuania in the autumn of 1939, the Tarbut society operating in Vilnius joined the Lithuanian Tarbut society and became its unit. The Tarbut society took over all the Vilnius-based institutions sponsored by the society, including the two-year teacher courses. On 26 January 1940, the Central Board of the Lithuanian Tarbut society applied to the Ministry of Education requesting to award permission for the continued functioning of the courses and asked to appoint Sara Dusznička-Shapiro the director of the courses⁸⁷. The application was not satisfied on the grounds that “there is currently a surplus of Jewish teacher candidates seeking school placement. Besides, the graduates of gymnasiums willing to prepare for the elementary school teacher’s position may enter Vilnius Pedagogical Institute”⁸⁸.

Such an answer did not prevent the follow-up applications. In March 1940, the Tarbut society again applied to the minister of education asking “to allow us to establish a two-year pedagogium with Hebrew as the language of instruction and to maintain it at our own cost. Learners who have previously graduated from a gymnasium or an equivalent school in Lithuania as well as the graduates of such a school in Poland by the end of the school year 1938/1939 will be admitted to the pedagogium”⁸⁹. Mečislovas Kviklys, the

⁸⁴ Žydų mokykloms reikiamą mokytojų kadrą parengs bendri valstybiniai mokytojų institutai. *Apžvalga*, 1936, balandžio 26.

⁸⁵ 31 05 1938 Memorandum of the Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 552, ap. 1, b. 50, l. 68.

⁸⁶ Hebrajų kalba ir žydų istorija Klaipėdos pedagoginiame institute. *Apžvalga*, 1938, birželio 19.

⁸⁷ 26 01 1940 Application of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2816, l. 21.

⁸⁸ 22 02 1940 Notification from Director of the Department Kviklys to the Central Board of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2816, l. 19.

⁸⁹ 15 03 1940 Application from the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2816, l. 14.

ministry's authorised representative, authorised the director of Vilnius Pedagogical Institute Mečislovas Mačernis to visit the mentioned pedagogium and to express his opinion⁹⁰.

After his visit to the pedagogium, Mačernis informed the Department of Elementary Schools in writing. He pointed out that on 16 November 1937, Vilnius curatory allowed the Tarbut society to keep the pedagogium. On 11 March 1939, the Polish Ministry of Education permitted the issue of certificates to the graduates of the pedagogium awarding the right to teach in elementary schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction. Mačernis noted that in Poland all Jewish elementary schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction were private and maintained by Jewish communities themselves⁹¹.

During the visit the students of two years were enrolled in the pedagogium. There were 30 first-year students: Lithuanian citizens – 12, unspecified citizenship – 7, without citizenship – 11. There were only 10 second-year students: Lithuanian citizens – 1, unspecified citizenship – 7, without citizenship – 2. A large number of second-year students came from more remote Polish regions and therefore they did not attend the pedagogium any more⁹².

The pedagogium had 9 teachers: Lithuanian citizens – 4, without citizenship – 4, unspecified citizenship – 1. Mačernis notes that “the pedagogical staff is rather good. Several teachers are especially good”. He also specified that the pedagogium had comparatively good and spacious premises granted by Vilnius Jewish community free of charge. There were two well-equipped handicraft classes, a nature room, a gym and a library with most books in Hebrew; the classes were rather well equipped as well. The three-year courses for the heads of kindergartens operated under the auspices of the pedagogium; girls with the educational background of the 6-year elementary school were admitted to these courses⁹³.

Based on Mačernis' favourable evaluation, from 1 March 1940 Minister of Education Kazimieras Jokantas awarded an authorisation for the Tarbut society to maintain a private teachers' seminary in Vilnius at their expense in place of the two-year pedagogium. The pedagogium could not operate any longer as such an institution for teacher training was not provided for by Lithuanian laws. Sara Dusznicka-Shapiro was approved as the director of the seminary. It was instructed to transfer the attendants of the pedagogium to the teachers' seminary and not to hold the final examinations in the spring of 1940, as the attendants had not yet studied the subjects of the Lithuanian language⁹⁴.

To sum up the training of teachers for Tarbut schools, it should be concluded that teacher training took place throughout the whole period of independence. The train-

⁹⁰ 15 03 1940 Application from the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2816, l. 14.

⁹¹ 06 04 1940 Notification from Director of Vilnius Pedagogical Institute Mačernis to the Department of Elementary Schools. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2816, l. 2.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ 29 04 1940 Notification from Inspector Valantinas to the Central Board of the Lithuanian Tarbut Society. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2816, l. 1.

ing of teachers for Jewish schools was governed by the Ministry of Education, which, circumstances permitted, provided financial support for the pedagogical courses with Hebrew as the language of instruction. The Tarbut society made an attempt to establish a teachers' seminary for several times, but an authorisation was not awarded.

Teacher training for religious schools

The network of Jewish Orthodox schools in Lithuania was smaller compared to the Tarbut represented school network. The major obstacle for this educational network to establish more religious gymnasiums for boys was the tendency that prevailed in religious groups to give priority to the traditional Cheder and Yeshiva as the major educational institutions⁹⁵. The number of the elementary schools of this type in Lithuania showed an upward trend in the first years of independence. As noted by the Central Committee of Ceirei Isroel in its application to the Ministry of Education, dated 5 December 1919, “the shortage of qualified Jewish teachers is getting worse over time; there is a number of larger and smaller cities and towns in Lithuania where hundreds of children remain without schooling due to the shortage of teachers”⁹⁶. Therefore, they requested to issue an authorisation for the establishment of six-month courses for Jewish teachers in Kaunas and wished to receive financial support from the state⁹⁷.

As specified in the course description, the purpose of the courses was “to train religious teachers who could teach Jewish children specific Jewish subjects in Hebrew in the traditional Jewish spirit by applying the principles of modern pedagogy”⁹⁸. The following subjects were assigned to the so called Jewish subjects: Hebrew, the Bible, the Talmud, Jewish history, science on Palestine, papers on Jews (14 hours per week in total). General subjects included the following: pedagogy and hygiene, Lithuanian, Lithuanian history, world history, natural sciences, singing, drawing, gymnastics (19 hours per week in total)⁹⁹.

The public officials from the Ministry of Education were favourably disposed towards the intention to open teacher courses, but they required to give more lessons for the state Lithuanian language and to teach Lithuanian history. According to Kuodaitis, a representative of the Ministry of Education, “our Jews are Lithuanian citizens and they have to consider themselves Lithuanian citizens”¹⁰⁰. However, the belonging of Ceirei Isroel

⁹⁵ ZALKIN, Mordechai. Žydų mokyklų idėjinė diferenciacija. Iš: *Lietuvos žydai. Istorinė studija*. Sudarė V. Sirutavičius, D. Staliūnas, J. Štaučiušaitė-Verbickienė. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2012, p. 364.

⁹⁶ 05 12 1919 Application of the Central Committee of Ceirei Isroel and the Board of the Teacher Courses to the Director of the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 72.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Ceirei Isroel Teacher Courses in Lithuania. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 73.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁰⁰ [Undated] Report of Kuodaitis to the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1963, l. 81.

to the union Agudas Isroel the bylaws of which included a provision that in case of liquidation of the union “all the inventory shall pass to the Central Committee of Agudas Israel in Frankfurt am Main” was considered an even greater drawback¹⁰¹. The Lithuanian government was not willing to provide financial support to the teacher courses, as there was an opportunity that in the event of liquidation, the property could pass to a foreign country, i.e. Germany.

Dr. Leo Deutschlander was selected as the head of the courses. Rabbi Shapiro, Kaplan, Smuylovich, Dr. Carlebach, Dr. Rachmilevich, Dr. Halberstadt were permitted to teach in the courses¹⁰². The opening ceremony of the teacher courses was held on 4 February 1920¹⁰³.

After less than six months, on 17 July 1920, the board of Cerei Isroel applied to the Ministry of Education asking to reorganise the courses into a teachers' seminary, which “should meet the requirements for general and Jewish education and satisfy the expectations of Jewish residents”¹⁰⁴. They wished to name it “The First Seminary for Jewish Teachers in Lithuania”. However, such a name was criticised by the Ministry for Jewish Affairs because the planned state Jewish teachers' seminary would then have to be called “the second”. The ministry also declared that it did not object to the request to establish a seminary¹⁰⁵.

After the proposal was made by the Ministry for Jewish Affairs, the Ministry of Education named the seminary “Ceirei Isroel Teachers' Seminary”. However, its initiators declared that not only the mentioned organisation but also the representatives of the Jewish society participated in the establishment and maintenance of the seminary and requested to name the seminary “The Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary in Lithuania”¹⁰⁶. The Ministry of Education agreed and on 9 November 1920 it was granted the desired name¹⁰⁷. On 10 October, the Ministry of Education was requested to approve Feivel Getz as the director of the seminary¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰¹ [Undated] Report of Kuodaitis to the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1963, l. 81.

¹⁰² 05 01 1920 Notification of the Department of Elementary Education to the Central Committee of Ceirei Isroel in Kaunas. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 67.

¹⁰³ 03 02 1920 Report of the Board of Ceirei Isroel Teacher Courses to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 66.

¹⁰⁴ 17 07 1920 Application of the Board of Ceirei Isroel to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 45.

¹⁰⁵ 09 09 1920 Report of the Ministry for Jewish Affairs to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 44.

¹⁰⁶ 20 10 1920 Application of the Central Committee of Ceirei Isroel in Lithuania to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 27.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, l. 25.

¹⁰⁸ 12 10 1920 Application of the Committee for the Establishment of the Jewish Teachers' Seminary in Kaunas to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 34.

From the establishment of the seminary its keepers requested the Ministry of Education to provide financial assistance to it. However, the ministry's representatives replied that it had already been decided when establishing the seminary that state resources would not be allocated to it¹⁰⁹. The lack of funds became the major obstacle for the seminary to expand. In the school year 1921–1922, the number of students at the seminary reduced from 39 to 27: out of 12 students who left the seminary, 10 were dismissed by the seminary due to the lack of funds. New students were not admitted to the first year of study as a result of the shortage of funds¹¹⁰.

A representative delegated by the ministry to the entrance examinations of 1921 provided certain information on the students at the Yavne seminary. It is pointed out in his report that 130 applications in total were submitted for the study in the seminary; only 30 individuals arrived to take the examinations, of whom nearly all were the students of cheders and yeshibots who were rather poorly versed in the subjects of general education. It was observed during the Lithuanian examination that candidates could not even write “the way the second-grade pupils from an elementary school can write. About half of the candidates understand Lithuanian and have some speaking skills; yet the other half, mostly coming from Polishized and Belarusianized regions of Augustow, Grodna, Vilnius and elsewhere, do not understand Lithuanian at all”¹¹¹.

From the very beginning the Yavne seminary had troubles regarding its premises. After the premises were leased out, they were soon taken by the army's general staff on a temporary basis. Later, the seminary's leadership resolved to move to the premises held by Ceirei Isroel, but soon, after the decision of the city's governor, these premises passed to the art museum¹¹².

In 1923, Ceirei Isroel decided to move the Yavne Teachers' Seminary to Telšiai from 1 September of the same year. The decision was grounded on the failure to find the premises suitable for the seminary in Kaunas by that time. The other motive was cheaper living in Telšiai compared to the capital. There was yet another circumstance – the education “of our children is better and easier in a small town, because there are a number of events, political and general by nature, disturbing the students' learning in a big city”¹¹³.

The seminary was moved to Telšiai where it resumed its activities from 1 December 1923. It settled in the premises of the Jewish Yavne Gymnasium where it occupied three

¹⁰⁹ 17 12 1920 Notification of the Department of Elementary Education to the Director of the Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1969, l. 8.

¹¹⁰ Report of the Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary for the School Year 1921/22. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1932, l. 7.

¹¹¹ 02 03 1921 Report of the Head of Adult Education to the Director of the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1931, l. 55.

¹¹² 26 04 1921 Application of the Director of the Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1931, l. 33.

¹¹³ 23 07 1923 Application of the Central Organisation Ceirei Isroel to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1932, l. 40.

rooms. When transferring the seminary to Telšiai, seven teachers were dismissed, as they were not willing to move to Telšiai¹¹⁴.

At the end of 1924, there were 48 students in the seminary: 28 men and 20 women. The youngest students were 16 years old, the oldest was 26 years of age. There was no dormitory for students. The teacher library had 179 books, while the student library had 208 books. The inventory consisted of 93 items with the total value of 1,125 litas. There was no tuition fee or examination fee. No allowance was received from the Ministry of Education. There were three funding sources – the Union of Rabbis, Central Relief based in the US and the Yavne society. They donated 16,340 litas in 1925. The maintenance of one student accounted for 948 litas per year¹¹⁵. Dr. Joel Zalcborg was the director of the seminary; expert in the Talmud and the Bible, rabbi Leizer Hirshovich also worked at the seminary; there were seven teachers and a clerk in total¹¹⁶.

In 1927, the elementary school inspector for Telšiai county paid a visit to Telšiai Yavne Seminary and reported its situation to the Ministry of Education. It was noted in the report that the learners of the seminary “learn the subjects required under the curriculum from the textbook by heart” and are not capable of distinguishing secondary subjects which are not really necessary in life. According to the inspector, too little attention was paid to Lithuanian, drawing, music, singing and the future teachers had too little lessons during the teaching practice. The inspector noted: “Generally speaking, as much as I have noticed, the life of the seminary is not yet taking a normal course. Though it is not in the normal course, I could not say that the situation is not tolerable, because special attention is paid to certain subjects and learners are well versed in them”¹¹⁷.

On 27–30 May 1930, Juozas Vokietaitis, Director of the Department of Elementary Education under the Ministry of Education, visited the seminary. He communicated his observations on the seminary to the minister of education. He noted that the seminary was lacking suitable premises, appropriate inventory and teaching aids; there were no rooms and a chemistry laboratory. The seminary could hardly draw 25 students, i.e. the minimum number, which was required to be eligible for the allowance from the Ministry of Education for teacher salaries. Nearly all students came from the rabbi seminary, meaning that they were well versed in Jewish religion related subjects but with little knowledge in the subjects of general education and, “most importantly, they have poor knowledge of the Lithuanian language even in the case of graduates, as I had a chance to notice during the examination in the methodology of regional studies taken by the fourth-year students”¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁴ Report of the Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary for 1923. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1932, l. 28.

¹¹⁵ Report of Telšiai Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary for 1925. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1934, l. 2.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 6.

¹¹⁷ 28 06 1927 Report of the Elementary School Inspector for Telšiai County to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1936, l. 59–60.

¹¹⁸ 10 06 1930 Report of Director of the 1st Department Vokietaitis to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 8, b. 4, 17 a. p.

The abovementioned shortcomings eventually led to negative outcomes. The problem is that at the end of the 1920s the Ministry of Education allocated financial support for the seminary. For example, in 1929, 16,771 litas was allocated for teacher salaries and 1,875 litas was given for student scholarships. At the same time, 12,000 litas was received from the Union of Rabbis, American Central Relief and Yavne¹¹⁹. As we can see, the funds allocated by the Ministry of Education was the major source of funding at that time. However, at the start of the school year 1932–1933, the funds of the Ministry of Education were only assigned to one year of the seminary, i.e. year 2. A delegation comprising the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Lithuanian Union of Rabbis Gurvich, Jewish military chaplain, rabbi Snieg and the seminary's director Golcberg paid a visit to the Minister of Education Šakenis. Their request for the allowance was supported by Shapiro, the chief rabbi of Lithuania. However, the request was not satisfied. What followed was the application to President Antanas Smetona, whose resolution was as follows: "Nevertheless, it seems to me that we should at least find an allowance for those learners who are currently enrolled in the teachers' seminary"¹²⁰. Irrespective of such a position of the President, the Ministry of Education did not allocate the allowance "due to a difficult budgetary situation; besides, an allowance was not promised to the learners of that year anyway"¹²¹.

In 1934, Minister of Education Juozas Tonkūnas discontinued financial support to the seminary "due to a low level of education and disorder"¹²². The Yavne society requested not to discontinue the financial support and promised to eliminate the shortcomings which resulted from the lack of funds¹²³. The Ministry of Education did not provide support for two months; later, with regard to the situation, the provision of the support was resumed¹²⁴.

At the end of the school year 1935–1936 the seminary was closed. No reasons of its closure could be found in the documents. It is likely due to the financial support discontinued by the Ministry of Education. It used to allocate an allowance when there were at least 25 students in one year. Meanwhile, in 1935, only 14 students passed the final examinations, of whom 4 were left to repeat the course, 4 had to retake the examinations

¹¹⁹ Report of Telšiai Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary for 1929. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1938, l. 3.

¹²⁰ 03 11 1932 Application of the Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary to the President of the Republic. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1941, l. 15.

¹²¹ 15 11 1932 Notification of the Director of the Department to the Director of the Yavne Seminary. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1941, l. 11.

¹²² 17 09 1934 Notification of Director of the Department Vaitiekūnas to the Central Committee of the Jewish School, Education and Upbringing Society Yavne. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1943, l. 30.

¹²³ 12 12 1934 Application of the Yavne Central Committee to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1943, l. 31.

¹²⁴ 24 11 1934 Notification of the Department of High Education to the Director of the Yavne Seminary. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1943, l. 32.

due to a failure and only 6 were issued a certificate¹²⁵. In 1936, the final examinations were taken by 16 students, of whom 10 were awarded a certificate¹²⁶. Hence, the number of students was too low. On the other hand, the pedagogical institute in Klaipėda began operation in 1935, and the Ministry of Education was convinced that the new institute had to provide training to the teachers for Jewish schools as well. In the autumn of 1937, the Jewish newspaper *Apžvalga* wrote that “Klaipėda Teachers’ Institute also admits Jews and there are a considerable number of them”¹²⁷.

As it could be expected, the former advocates of the Yavne seminary sought to resume the seminary’s activities. After a break of one year, on 15 August 1937, it was reopened in Telšiai under the name “Telšiai Yavne Jewish Private Teachers’ Seminary”¹²⁸. It operated in the house of Gedvilienė and Schiff; 2,100 litas per year was paid for rent. When the seminary started operating, the studies were organised in two years – the first and the second – with 52 students. As the Ministry of Education did not provide funds for the seminary, tuition fees became its major source of funding. From its opening on 1 January 1938, 7,250 litas was received from tuition fees; every student had to pay 35 litas per month. Other funds came from the following sources: 701 litas was received from Central Relief; 560 litas from the Yavne society; 248 litas was collected for examinations¹²⁹. It is obvious that the financial support provided by the sponsors reduced compared to the previous year.

In the spring of 1938, Rainys, the inspector from the Ministry of Education, paid a visit to the Yavne Teachers’ Seminary and reported his observations to the director of the Department of Elementary Education. At that time, 17 boys were first-year students and 31 girls studied in the third year. Lessons would start at 10 a.m. because students had to gather for a prayer before breakfast. After prayer they would go home for breakfast or used to eat in the school room designated for that purpose. Lessons would start after breakfast.

Rainys notes: “At the seminary, students, especially boys, are not only prepared for the teacher’s profession but also as rabbis. The seminary looks like a Jewish religious institution: students and teachers wear yarmulkes in a classroom and caps in the staff room. There are a lot of classes of religion under the approved timetable. Their number is increased by the time of prayer and lectures on the Bible and the Talmud. If we add the classes of religion provided for under the timetable and the time for prayer and lectures,

¹²⁵ Procedure of final examinations at Telšiai Yavne Jewish Teachers’ Seminary, May–June 1935. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2801, l. 1.

¹²⁶ Procedure of final examinations at Telšiai Yavne Jewish Teachers’ Seminary, May–June 1936. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2808, l. 30.

¹²⁷ Žydų švietimo ir kultūros reikalai. *Apžvalga*, 1937, rugsėjo 19.

¹²⁸ Report of Telšiai Yavne Jewish Private Teachers’ Seminary for 1938. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2605, l. 33.

¹²⁹ Report of Telšiai Yavne Jewish Private Teachers’ Seminary for 1937. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2669, l. 42.

we get from 3 to 4 hours per day devoted to religion in the first year. There are a bit less of religious classes in the third year, in which girls are enrolled.”¹³⁰

At the start of the school year 1938–1939, the number of students at the seminary increased: there were 14 boys in the first year, 23 boys in the second year and 31 girls in the third year, totalling 68 students¹³¹. However, the situation changed remarkably after a year. In the autumn of 1939 it was resolved to cancel the first year altogether because the number of entrants was too low¹³². Only the second year with 19 boys and the third year with 14 boys remained¹³³.

When Vilnius was ceded to Lithuania in October 1939, the supporters of the seminary got an idea that perhaps the Ministry of Education would transfer the seminary to Vilnius. However, the answer was received that the Ministry of Education was not planning to transfer the seminary to Vilnius. The private seminary could be transferred by its keepers upon prior consent from the Ministry of Education¹³⁴.

In 1940, the Ministry of Education allocated the allowance of 5,000 litas to the seminary, of which 2,000 litas was transferred to the seminary, whereas the remaining 3,000 litas remained untransferred until the autumn of that year. On 25 September, Trachtenberg, the former director of the seminary, asked the People's Commissariat for Education to pay out those funds. The request makes it clear that the property of the Yavne private seminary was in the hands of the People's Commissariat for Education at that time¹³⁵.

For a certain period of time the courses were organised under the auspices of the seminary. When mandatory elementary education was introduced in Lithuania in 1928, according to the Yavne society, the number of pupils enrolled in schooling increased and thus the demand for teachers in elementary schools grew as well. Due to the above reason, the Yavne Central Committee took an initiative to open one-year pedagogical courses under Telšiai Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary. It was planned to admit the graduates of a gymnasium in Lithuania to the courses. The courses had to comply with the curriculum that was approved in the one-year courses organised in Marijampolė by supplementing them with Jewish religion, ethics of Jewish religion, Bible methodology

¹³⁰ 09 05 1938 Report of Inspector Rainys after visiting Telšiai Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2806, l. 30.

¹³¹ 02 10 1938 Report of the Director of the Yavne Seminary to the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2806, l. 73.

¹³² 16 08 1939 Minutes of the Meeting of the Teachers Council of Telšiai Yavne Jewish Private Teachers' Seminary. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2804, l. 11.

¹³³ 14 09 1939 Report of the Yavne Seminary to the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2807, l. 1.

¹³⁴ 08 01 1940 Notification from Director of the Department of Elementary Education Kviklys to the Director of Telšiai Yavne Private Teachers' Seminary. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2806, l. 24.

¹³⁵ 25 09 1940 Application of Former Director of Telšiai Yavne Jewish Private Teachers' Seminary Trachtenberg to the People's Commissar for Education. *LCVA*, f. R-762, ap. 4, b. 206, l. 9.

and Hebrew methodology¹³⁶. The graduates of the one-year course had to pass examinations in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Education and were awarded the right to work in Jewish elementary and secondary schools. It was requested to approve Golcberg, the director of the Yavne seminary, as the head of the courses¹³⁷. The date of opening of the courses is considered 20 August 1928. The courses took place in the Yavne girls' gymnasium. Six teachers worked in the courses¹³⁸. In the autumn of 1928, the course was attended by 30 learners from 16 to 23 years old¹³⁹.

A new course was not organised in the school year 1929–1930. The Yavne Central Committee gave the following reason: “During this school year, our pedagogical efforts were dedicated to the graduates of our seminary.”¹⁴⁰ Whereas a significant part of male graduates of the seminary had to perform military service, the society decided to resume the courses from the autumn of 1930. However, the data on the courses in later years are lacking.

To sum up the activities of the Yavne Jewish Teachers' Seminary, it should be noted that it was the only seminary throughout the period of independence which trained teachers for Jewish schools. The Ministry of Education provided substantial financial support to it, though it would often receive criticism due to the low level of education.

Teacher training for the schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction

Whereas a significant number of Jews spoke Yiddish in Lithuania, they desired to educate their children in the schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction. Teachers were required for such schools. The Jewish Cultural League took an initiative. At the end of 1921, it applied to the Ministry of Education asking for an authorisation to open nine-month courses for Jewish teachers in Kaunas. On 5 December 1921, the ministry awarded an authorisation and declared that those who completed the courses and passed the final examinations would be awarded the right to teach in an elementary school. In order to achieve that Jewish teachers were fluent in Lithuanian, the ministry requested to devote at least one lesson per day to Lithuanian¹⁴¹.

¹³⁶ 02 05 1928 Application of the Central Committee of the Yavne Society in Lithuania to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, ap. 3, b. 1937, l. 242.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Report on the Yavne one-year Jewish pedagogical course for the school year 1928/29. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2139, l. 1–2.

¹³⁹ List of students in the Yavne one-year pedagogical course in the school year 1928/29. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 1937, l. 193.

¹⁴⁰ 27 06 1930 Report of the Yavne Central Committee to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2150, l. 23.

¹⁴¹ 19 12 1921 Notification of the Department of Elementary Education to the Board of Kaunas Jewish Cultural Union. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2034, l. 418.

As it soon turned out that a part of course attendants were poorly prepared in certain subjects, the Jewish Cultural League decided to extend the teaching time to two years. In September 1922, it expressed a request to establish a two-year teachers' seminary in place of the existing courses¹⁴². Minister of Education Petras Juodakis issued an authorisation to reorganise the nine-month courses into the two-year teacher courses¹⁴³.

The Jewish Cultural League was not satisfied with the minister's decision; therefore, on 27 November 1922, it repeatedly applied to the Ministry of Education requesting for permission to establish a teachers' seminary. This time, they wished to establish a four-year seminary. In the application the chairman of the Jewish Cultural League Abramson and the head of the courses Levin noted that "all courses are temporary institutions" and a teachers' seminary with a clear curriculum was required. They also noted that qualified teachers were not only required for elementary schools but also "for schools of higher level where Jewish teachers were really lacking"¹⁴⁴. They noted that the existing courses met the requirements applicable to seminaries – they had a chemistry-physics room, a library, a small room of experimental psychology and pedagogy, a workshop for woodwork, a garden, etc.¹⁴⁵ However, on 2 December 1922, Minister of Education Juodakis again took an unfavourable decision: "To postpone until the issue of the Jewish Teachers' Seminary is solved"¹⁴⁶.

In the autumn of 1923, there was only one class in the two-year course (i.e. those who studied for the second year) with 21 students – 9 boys and 12 girls – and 13 employees. Most of teachers had a higher education diploma from foreign universities: Levin, the head of the course, was the graduate of Rostov and Zurich universities, Dr. Joffe graduated from Zurich University, prominent psychologist, Dr. Lazerson graduated from Zurich University, Dr. Finkelstein was the graduate of Berlin University¹⁴⁷.

In 1923, the budget of 24,000 litas was spent to maintain the course. Tuition fees were not collected; no financial support was received from the Ministry of Education. The Jewish Cultural League was the only sponsor of the course¹⁴⁸. The above society had a huge financial burden. In 1924, the society did not raise funds, and the course was not yet held at the beginning of October of the same year¹⁴⁹. As the funds could not be

¹⁴² 26 10 1922 Application of the Jewish Cultural League to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2034, l. 415.

¹⁴³ 10 10 1922 Notification of the Department of Elementary Education to the Board of Kaunas Jewish Cultural League. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2034, l. 414.

¹⁴⁴ 27 11 1922 Application of the Jewish Cultural Union (Cultural League) to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2034, l. 411.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Report on the Jewish Cultural League's teacher course for 1923. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2827, l. 4.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, l. 3.

¹⁴⁹ 04 10 1924 Report of the head of the Jewish Cultural League's teacher courses Levin to the Adviser for Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2078, l. 44.

raised, on 22 October, the chairman of the society Abramson informed the Ministry of Education that the courses were closed¹⁵⁰.

As mentioned before, when it turned out in 1924 that the Jewish Cultural League had become the tool of the communist propaganda, it was closed down¹⁵¹. On 28 October 1924, the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child expressed its wish to take over the courses. They asked to approve former director of the courses Levin as the director of the courses¹⁵². On 10 January 1925, the society was allowed to establish two-year courses in Kaunas, but the minister of education refused to approve Levin as the head of the courses¹⁵³.

At the end of 1925, 20 students – 11 boys and 9 girls – were enrolled in the course. The Ministry of Education refused to give an allowance for the course. All funds were received from the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child, the Jewish Knowledge Lovers Society and the Jewish Education Society. The head of the courses, Ms Rabinovich notes in the report that “the financial situation of the course is indeed very difficult and the funds from the Ministry of Education are considered very necessary”¹⁵⁴.

The financial situation of the courses remained difficult. In the summer of 1926, the organisers of the course were lacking funds for the salaries of teachers and other employees for the previous six months. The society applied to the Ministry of Education for an allowance by reminding that financial support was allocated to the courses run by the Tarbut society and the teachers’ seminary maintained by Yavne. It was noted that only “the teacher courses of our democratic society, the only courses preparing teachers for Jewish elementary schools, which use the Jewish spoken language (Yiddish) as the language of instruction and enroll the children of poor families, are not provided state support”¹⁵⁵. However, Minister Vincas Čepinskis did not satisfy the application due to the shortage of funds¹⁵⁶.

In 1927, the rapporteur of the Ministry of Education Sluoksnaitis paid a visit to the course during final examinations and evaluated the course organisation positively. He pointed out that 22 students took the final examinations and 17 students passed them. He wrote: “The students’ performance during examinations was satisfactory. Apparently, the

¹⁵⁰ 22 10 1924 Report of the chairman of the Jewish Cultural League Abramson to the Adviser for Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2078, l. 33.

¹⁵¹ Kaip buvo įtraukta Kultūr-Lyga į komunistų darbą. *Lietuvos aidas*, 1928, vasario 6.

¹⁵² 28 10 1924 Application of the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child to the Department of Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2078, l. 32.

¹⁵³ 10 01 1925 Notification of the Adviser for Elementary Education to the leadership of the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2078, l. 28.

¹⁵⁴ Report on the teacher course of the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child for 1925. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2078, l. 2–3.

¹⁵⁵ 12 07 1926 Application of the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child to the Ministry of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2101, l. 118.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

teaching work during the course was serious and resourceful. Much attention was paid to handicraft. From an educational perspective, the course creates a very good impression. [...] The apartment in which the course is organised is clean and tidy.”¹⁵⁷

In 1927, the Ministry of Education increased requirements for those who were seeking placement as elementary school teachers. Therefore, in its letter, dated 27 June 1927, the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child noted: “With the growing requirements for teachers applied by the Ministry of Education in mind, the further existence of two-year teacher courses makes no sense.”¹⁵⁸ The society pointed out that the existing courses were the only in Lithuania training teachers for Jewish elementary schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction. As many as sixteen requests for teachers to be appointed to schools which were received by the society in 1926 testified that such teachers were in demand. There were not many individuals who could become teachers, as there was only one gymnasium in Ukmergė with Yiddish as the language of instruction, and only a small percentage of graduates were willing to work in elementary schools¹⁵⁹. Hence, under such circumstances, the society repeatedly requested to reorganise the pedagogical courses into a teachers’ seminary, which would confer its graduates with the teacher’s rights as laid down in the law. Unfortunately, Minister of Education Šakenis only agreed to the establishment of one-year pedagogical courses¹⁶⁰.

In the spring of 1928, the society lodged an application for permission to establish one-year courses awarding the right to work as elementary and secondary school teachers. It was planned to organise the courses in the same premises of the two-year teacher courses; it was requested to authorise Levin to act as the head of the courses as he had previously served in this position¹⁶¹.

There are grounds to believe that in 1928 the courses were not opened, because two societies – the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child and the Lithuanian Jewish Education Society – applied to the Minister of Education after some time requesting for permission to establish Jewish teacher courses in Kaunas. In his resolution, the Minister of Education pointed out that “only one society” might receive an authorisation to establish teacher courses”¹⁶². At that time, the right to keep one-year Jewish pedagogical courses was awarded to the Lithuanian Jewish Education

¹⁵⁷ 30 07 1927 Report of Rapporteur Sluoksnaitis to the Adviser for Elementary Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2101, l. 50.

¹⁵⁸ 27 06 1927 Application of the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2101, l. 52.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ 14 05 1928 Application of the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 8, b. 127, l. 15.

¹⁶² 25 03 1929 Application of the Lithuanian Jewish Education Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2177, l. 41.

Society. On 27 March 1929, Minister of Education Šakenis issued permission to open the courses; however, he noted that the Ministry of Education would not grant an allowance¹⁶³.

It was specified in the application of the aforementioned society that there were 20 elementary schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction and 5 secondary and high schools (i.e. gymnasium and four progymnasiums – author's note) in Lithuania at that time. Besides, teachers with Yiddish as the language of instruction were required for evening courses and there were several dozens of them; they were also required for the courses of the Ort society, the courses of the Oze society and the Jewish Agricultural School¹⁶⁴.

The pedagogical courses kept by the Kaunas Jewish Education Society had 22 students in the spring of 1931¹⁶⁵. Having passed the examinations in all 16 subjects, the attendants were awarded the right to work as elementary school teachers¹⁶⁶.

In 1933, the abovementioned Jewish Education Society took an initiative to establish the courses for the training of teachers required for kindergartens, orphanages, children's summer grounds and colonies¹⁶⁷. Additional information makes it clear that there was an intention to open two-year teacher courses in Kaunas leading to the title of the trainee teacher in an elementary school. The courses had to operate in the premises of Kaunas Jewish High School of Commerce during the afternoon hours. The tuition fee was 20 litas per month¹⁶⁸.

There are no data on the teacher courses founded by the Lithuanian Jewish Education Society in a later period. It is likely that after the pedagogical institute was established in Klaipėda, no separate courses for Jewish teachers with Yiddish as the language of instruction were already organised. As mentioned above, the Ministry of Education was willing to transfer the training of all teachers to the institute founded in Klaipėda.

To sum up the training of teachers for Jewish elementary schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction, it should be said that the teacher courses were not supported by the state financially, and their situation was rather complicated during the whole period. Schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction had the smallest network compared to Tarbut and Yavne; therefore, the number of learners was insufficient to receive financial support. Other reasons might have played a role as well.

¹⁶³ 25 03 1929 Application of the Lithuanian Jewish Education Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2177, l. 41.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ 01 05 1931 Report of Inspector for High and Secondary Schools Miškinis to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2156, l. 40.

¹⁶⁶ 06 05 1931 Order of Minister of Education Konstantinas Šakenis. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2156, l. 38.

¹⁶⁷ 24 06 1933 Report of the Lithuanian Jewish Education Society to the Minister of Education. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2457, l. 194.

¹⁶⁸ 14 09 1933 Report of the Lithuanian Jewish Education Society to the Director of the 1st Department. *LCVA*, f. 391, ap. 3, b. 2457, l. 192.

Conclusions

Jewish elementary schools founded in the restored state of Lithuania were divided into three educational trends depending on the language used in the Jewish society and its relationship with religion. The interests of secular schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction were expressed by the Tarbut society; Jewish Orthodox schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction were represented by the society Yavne, whereas the secular schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction were supported by the Jewish Cultural League. As teachers were lacking in the newly established schools, the Ministry of Education together with the Ministry for Jewish Affairs organised summer courses in the period 1919 to 1923. The Jewish elementary school teachers of all educational trends improved their qualification in the courses. The graduates had an opportunity to obtain the junior teacher's qualification. When Jewish societies founded long-term courses and the seminary, the significance of summer courses reduced, but they were still organised by Tarbut and Yavne societies on an irregular basis.

In 1922, the Tarbut society established two-year pedagogical courses intended for secular elementary school teachers with Hebrew as the language of instruction in Kaunas; the courses functioned until 1933. They were financially supported by the Ministry of Education. During that period the society repeatedly requested to award an authorisation to establish a teachers' seminary, but different ministers of education did not give their permission. After the pedagogical institute was founded in Klaipėda in 1935, it was the intention of the Ministry of Education that the institute would also provide training for Jewish school teachers. Hence, the Tarbut society was no longer authorised to hold two-year courses. An exception was only made in Vilnius after it was ceded to Lithuania, where the Tarbut society was authorised to establish a private teachers' seminary in the spring of 1940.

To train teachers for Jewish Orthodox elementary schools, the society Ceirei Isroel founded courses in Kaunas in 1919. In 1920, in place of the courses, the society established a teachers' seminary which functioned in Kaunas until 1923. Afterwards, it was moved to Telšiai, where the seminary pursued its activities until 1936 under the "Yavne" name. From 1937, the seminary resumed its activities and functioned until 1940. It was supported by the Ministry of Education. The seminary stood out from others by the considerable attention paid to Judaism. From 1928, one-year teacher courses functioned under the auspices of the seminary.

Nine-month courses were founded by the Jewish Cultural League to train the teachers for secular elementary schools with Yiddish as the language of instruction. From 1922 until the beginning of the 1930s, two-year courses functioned in Kaunas. From 1924, the courses were kept by the Society for the Support of the Physical and Mental Wellbeing of the Jewish Child and by the Jewish Education Society afterwards. An attempt to reorganise the courses into a seminary was made for several times, but it was not supported by the

ministers of education. As the courses were not financially supported by the Ministry of Education, their financial situation was difficult.

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Mokytojų rengimas žydų pradžios mokykloms Lietuvoje 1919–1940 metais

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Santrauka

Mokytojų rengimo žydų pradžios mokykloms tema nėra tyrinėta, įvairiuose šaltiniuose galima užtikti tik fragmentiškų žinių. Šia straipsnio tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti, kaip buvo rengiami mokytojai skirtingų ugdymo krypčių žydų pradžios mokykloms, kokie buvo valdžios ir žydų draugijų siekiai, susiję su mokytojų rengimu.

Atliekant tyrimą buvo naudojamos Lietuvos centriniame valstybės archyve, Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ministerijos fonde (f. 391), saugomais dokumentais. Didžiausią dalį dokumentų sudaro žydų mokytojų kursus išlaikančių draugijų „Tarbut“, „Javne“, „Žydų kultūrinė lyga“ ir kt. siųsti prašymai ir metinės ataskaitos Švietimo ministerijai bei ministerijos įsakymai arba nurodymai minėtoms draugijoms. Buvo tyrinėti dokumentai, saugomi žydų kultūros ir švietimo draugijos „Tarbut“ fonde (f. 552), taip pat remtasi „Steigiamojo Seimo darbais“, to meto periodiniais leidiniais.

Tyrimo metu buvo taikyti teoriniai tyrimo metodai – analizė ir sintezė. Surinkti istorijos faktai išdėstyti taikant naratyvinį (aprašomąjį) metodą. Žydų mokytojų rengimas trijų ugdymo krypčių pradžios mokykloms nagrinėtas remiantis lyginamuoju istoriniu metodu. Kiekviena atskirai paimta žydų mokytojų rengimo pradžios mokykloms sistema nušviesta remiantis chronologiniu metodu. Esminiai mokytojų rengimo sistemos bruožai atskleisti, taikant abstrakcijos metodą.

Atlikus tyrimą konstatuota, kad atkurtoje Lietuvos valstybėje buvo steigiamos žydų pradžios mokyklos, susiskirstytos į tris ugdymo kryptis pagal žydų visuomenėje vartotą kalbą ir santykį su religija. Pasaulietinių mokyklų dėstomąja hebrajų kalba interesams atstovavo draugija „Tarbut“, žydų ortodoksų mokyklų dėstomąja hebrajų kalba – draugija „Javne“ ir pasaulietinių mokyklų dėstomąja idiš kalba – „Žydų kultūrinė lyga“. Kadangi įsteigtoms mokykloms trūko mokytojų, Švietimo ministerija kartu su Žydų reikalų ministerija 1919–1923 m. organizavo vasaros kursus. Juose kvalifikaciją kėlė visų ugdymo krypčių žydų pradžios mokyklų mokytojai. Kursus baigusiems asmenims buvo sudaryta galimybė įgyti jaunesniojo mokytojo kvalifikaciją. Vėliau, kai žydų draugijos įsteigė ilgalaikius kursus ir seminariją, vasaros kursų reikšmė sumažėjo, tačiau juos nereguliariai organizuodavo draugijos „Tarbut“ ir „Javne“.

Mokytojams pasaulietinėms pradžios mokykloms dėstomąja hebrajų kalba rengti draugija „Tarbut“ 1922 m. Kaune įsteigė dvejų metų trukmės pedagoginius kursus, kurie veikė iki 1933 m. Kursams Švietimo ministerija skirdavo lėšų. Per tą laiką draugija keletą kartų prašė

leisti įsteigti mokytojų seminariją, tačiau skirtingi švietimo ministrai to daryti neleido. 1935 m. įsteigus pedagoginį institutą Klaipėdoje, Švietimo ministerija siekė, kad jame būtų rengiami ir mokytojai žydų mokykloms, todėl neleido daugiau draugijai „Tarbut“ steigti dvimečių kursų. Išimtis padaryta atgautame Vilniuje, kur 1940 m. pavasarį draugijai „Tarbut“ leista įsteigti privačią mokytojų seminariją.

Mokytojams žydų ortodoksinėms pradžios mokykloms rengti draugija „Ceirei Isroel“ 1919 m. Kaune įsteigė kursus. Vietoje kursų 1920 m. įsteigė mokytojų seminariją, kuri veikė Kaune iki 1923 m. Po to ją perkėlė į Telšius, kur seminarija, pavadinta „Javne“, veikė iki 1936 m. Nuo 1937 m. seminarija veiklą atnaujino ir veikė iki 1940 m. Švietimo ministerija jai skyrė lėšų. Seminarija išsiskyrė tuo, jog daug dėmesio buvo skiriama judaizmo religijai. Nuo 1928 m. prie seminarijos veikė metiniai mokytojų kursai.

Mokytojams pasaulietinėms pradžios mokykloms dėstomąja idiš kalba rengti draugija „Žydų kultūrinė lyga“ 1921 m. įsteigė devynių mėnesių kursus. Nuo 1922 m. iki 4-ojo dešimtmečio pradžios Kaune veikė jų įsteigti dvejų metų trukmės kursai. Nuo 1924 m. kursas išlaikė „Žydų vaiko fizinio ir dvasinio stovio ištyrimui draugija“, vėliau – „Žydų švietimo draugija“. Keletą kartų norėta šiuos kursus reorganizuoti į seminariją, tačiau švietimo ministrai nedavė tam leidimo. Šiems kursams Švietimo ministerija neskyrė lėšų, todėl jų padėtis buvo sunki.

Atliktas tyrimas leis geriau suvokti žydų švietimą ir žydų tautinės mažumos padėtį Lietuvos Respublikoje.

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