



PROGRAM

BET DEBORA

**Fifth Conference of European Women Rabbis, Jewish Community
Politicians, Activists, Scholars and Interested Women and Men**

**MIGRATION, COMMUNICATION AND HOME
Jewish Tradition, Change & Gender in a Global Context**

*Sofia,
25-28 June, 2009
Tammuz, 3-6, 5769*

*Jewish Sofia & City Walking Tours: 2 optional tours on June 25 (2p.m.-4 p.m.) and June 28
(10:45a.m.-12:45 p.m.). Meeting point: Sofia Synagogue Museum. Please subscribe by e-
mail: betdebora2009@gmail.com*

Telephone of the conference: + 359 (0) 896 390 572

Thursday, June 25, 2009

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.: **Guided Walking Tour**

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.: **Registration & Light Meal**

6:30 p.m. **Welcoming Address**

7:00 – 8:00 p.m. **Ruth Rosenfelder, UK:** "This Is My Song: Sephardi and Ashkenazi
Women's Music as Expression of Exile and Identity" - Chair: **Ruth Mastron, US**

8:00 - 8:15 p.m.: **Lika Eshkenazi** – Sephardic Songs

8:30 -8:45 p.m. **“Agada” Choir Musical Performance**, conducted by **Dorian Molhov**.

Friday, June 26, 2009

9:30– 10:10 a.m. Shacharit (Bet Shalom)

10:10 a.m.– 12:20

Migration as an Existential, Social and Global Reality

- **Bonna Devora Haberman, IL:** “Re-Visioning Zionism in Crisis: Toward a Gender
Analysis of “Home” in Text and Society”

- **Rabbi Sybil Sheridan, UK:** “The Women of the Falash Mura: Connecting with Faith
and Coping with Change”

- **Amos Israel, IL:** “From the State to the Global and from the “Us-Them” Paradigm to
a Multiplayer System”

Chair: Tania Reytan, BG

12:20 – 1:30 p.m., Lunch

1:30– 3:00 p.m., Discussions & Workshops

Migration & Family: Intermarriage, Ethnicity and Identity

- *Talin Bahcivanoglu, DE/TR: "Der Exot auf meinem Biedermeier Sofa" ("The exotic character on my Biedermeier sofa")- In German, translation by Sandra Lustig, DE/US*
- *Irina Chongarova - Aron, BG/UK: Inter-marriage, inter-ethnicity and quest for identity; Related Film screening;*

Chair: Tania Reytan, BG

3:00 - 3:20 p.m. – Coffee & Networking Break

3:20 – 4:20 p.m. Networking & Jewish Women Status

- *Michal Ben-Ya'akov, IL/US, Presentation of the HBI, Brandeis University Feasibility Study of the Status of Jewish Women in Europe: (video documentation of the session)*

4:40 – 5:40 p.m.

Intercultural Communication: Distinctiveness & Full Part in Wider Society

- *Ruth Mastron, CA: Cultural detective: Communicating Jewish Culture to Others*

Chair: Irina Chongarova, BG/UK

5: 40 - 6:00 p.m. – Coffee & Networking Break

6:00 – 7:40 p.m.

Mobility & Tradition: Jewish women's Ritual & Social Activism:

Francine Zuckerman, CA, Norma Joseph, CA:

Film screening (58 min) of F. Zuckerman's "Half the Kingdom" & Follow-up discussion with Francine Zuckerman and Prof. Norma Joseph

7:40 – 8:30, Preparation for Shabbat

8:30 p.m. - Kabbalat Shabbat (Jerusalem Hall)

Hazzan Jalda Rebling (DE), Rabbi Sybil Sheridan (UK), Aliza Lavie IL, Bonna Haberman (IL), etc.

Followed by Kiddush and Dinner

Saturday, June 27, 2009

9:00 – 10:45 a.m. - Shabbat Shacharit (Jerusalem Hall)

10:45 – 11:00 a.m. – Coffee & Cake

11: 00 – 11: 15 a.m. –Eva Volitzer, Ancient Sephardic Songs

11:25 – 12:45 p.m.

Mobility & Tradition: Jewish women's Prayers & Ritual:

- *Aliza Lavie, IL: Tefillat Nashim: Jewish Women's Prayers throughout the Ages;*
- *Hazzan Jalda Rebling, DE: "Globalization: challenge or chance for Jewish liturgy?";*

Chair: **Rabbi Sybil Sheridan, UK;**
(Consecutive translation into Bulgarian)

12:50 – 1:50 p.m.

Bet Debora 10th Anniversary Round Table Discussion:

- **Lara Daemmig, DE; Toby Axelrod, DE; Rabbi Sybil Sheridan, UK, T. Reytan, BG**
- Chair: **Sandra Lustig, DE**

1:50 - 2:45 p.m. Kiddush and Lunch (Beit Ha'am)

2:50 – 4:30 p.m.

Mobility & Tradition: Jewish women's Ritual & Personal Reality

- **Iris Weiss, DE: Bibliolog/Bibliodrama workshop: Transitions and Transformations: Noemi, Ruth and Orpa**

4:30– 5:00 p.m. Coffee

5:00 – 6:10

Aliza Lavie, IL, Workshop on: "Private vs Public Prayer" & "The Language of Prayer - Hebrew is difficult!" (Consecutive translation into Bulgarian)

6:20 – 8:20

Russian-Jewish Migration in Germany and the Future of German Jewry:

- **Irene Runge, DE**, "Jewish Immigration and Contemporary Germany"
- **Judith Kessler, DE**, "Homo Sovieticus in Disneyland. Jewish Communities in Germany Today" (in German, with translation by Sandra Lustig, DE);
- **Elena Gubenko, DE**, "The German Jewish Community, Looking for New Ways; Criticism, Analysis and Future Visions" (in Russian, with translation in English, T. Reytan);

Chair: **Lara Daemmig**

8:20 – 9:45

Opening of an Art Exhibition, Dinner & Poetry

- **Opportunity to speak with the artists: Alexandra Ivoylova, Nelly Sand, Selma Todorova, Sergei Ivoylov and Simeon Krystev: Jerusalem hall, Beit Ha'am;**
Poetry performance by Hava Pinhas Cohen

9:45 Havdala, Hazzan Jalda Rebling and Rabbi Sybil Sheridan – OutDoors Havdala, if weather permits

Sunday, June 28, 2009

9:00 – 9:30 a.m. - Shacharit (Bet Shalom)

9:30– 10:50 a.m.

Migration as a Personal, Social, Demographic & Communal Problem

- **Mira Yungman, IL: "American Professional Women Pioneers and Russian Speaking Professional Women in Israel: A Comparison"**
- **Michal Ben-Ya'akov, IL : "Portable Homes? Moroccan Jewish Women on the Move"**

Chair: **Sandra Lustig**

10:50 – 12:50 – Sofia Synagogue Museum and Walking Tour

12:50 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30 – 2:50 p.m.:

Migration & Home: Food in Jewish Cultural and Global Contexts

- Norma Josef, CA, “From Baghdad to Montreal: Food, Gender and Ethnic Identity”
- Talin Bahcivanoglu, DE/TR: Jewish/Armenian Dialogue in Joint Cooking Sessions

Chair: Marina Nanyova, BG

2:50– 3:10 p.m. - Coffee & Networking Break

3:10 – 5:30 p.m.:

Migration & Home as an Existential & Personal Reality

- Amos Israel, IL: Jewish Communal Coping with Sexual Violence
- Sandi Wisenberg, USA: How Jewish is it? The American Ashkenazi Cancer Journey
- Tanya Ury, DE: Multi-media presentations: “Touch Me Not” & “Self-portrait of a self-hating Jew”

Chair: Toby Axelrod, DE

5:30 – 6:10 - Coffee & Film screening: “The House on Jacobtsa Str.”30 min (subtitles);

6:10 – 6:30 p.m.: Bus Transfer to Pancho Vladigerov Museum House

6:35 - 7:45 p.m.

Migration and Music as a Mode of Communication:

- Svetlana Avdala, BG: “Home is Music” Pancho Vladigerov's Musical Heritage (Translation T. Reytan)
- Concert (Pancho Vladigerov Museum House)

7:50 – 8:10 p.m. Bus Transfer from Museum House to Downtown

8:20 – 9:40 p.m. - Farewell Dinner

List of Speakers, Artists & Performers:

Aliza Lavie, PhD, is a lecturer in the Department of Political Studies at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. Her fields of research include gender, public communications, and the world of feminine Jewish wisdom and knowledge. She is also a [presenter and editor of television programs on Jewish paintings culture](#), and is active in social initiatives of tolerance, equality, and empowerment. Aliza’s book “*A Jewish Woman's Prayer Book - Tefilat Nashim*” was published in Hebrew by *Yedioth Aharonoth* in 2005 and has sold more than 95,000 copies, earning “Gold Book” & “Platinum Book” award. In 2008 it was published in English and won the 2008 *National Jewish Book Award*, becoming a best-seller. She is a sought-after speaker in Israel and overseas, on subjects relating to women’s prayers, Jewish culture and identity, Israeli society, and Israel-Diaspora relations.

Alexandra Ivoylova, BG, has graduated the National Conservatoire “Pancho Vladigerov”, her specialization being piano. After her graduation she specialized further in Paris. Alexandra has multiple talents. She illustrates books and periodicals and exhibited her paintings in many expositions. She publishes musical, art and literary criticism, essays, maxims, and poetry (including haiku and poetry for children). She is the author of 3 books of poetry: *Bitter Rains*, *Homages* and *Reflections* and one book of maxims: *Sudden Thoughts*. Her works have been translated in 6 languages. She is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists, the Union of Freelance Bulgarian Writers, the Bulgarian Haiku Club, and the World Haiku Association. Conference participants will have a chance to listen to her brief introduction to the history of Jews on the Bulgarian lands at the Sofia Synagogue Museum before the two walking tours.

Amos Israel-Vleeschhouwer lives with Esther and their four children in Jerusalem, Israel. Amos is a PhD Candidate at the Tel-Aviv University law faculty. AΦΠ thesis is on "The Attitudes of Jewish law to International law, and the interaction between these legal systems". He holds an MA in social psychology from TAU (2001) and an LLM degree from the TAU law faculty (2007). Amos volunteers at the hotline for (religious) male victims of sexual abuse, and at the rape crisis center educational department. He teaches at the Interdisciplinaire Center in Herzelia, and taught at the Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University and the Open University. His Hebrew publications include an article about the regulation of male sexual fantasies and gaze in Jewish law and thought (3rd Kolech conference book) and a forthcoming article about philosophical aspects of the meeting between Jewish and international law. He wrote short articles for "Shabbat shalom" about sexual abuse, about 'power' and about nationality. In English his "Halacha and Globalization: Conceptual Impacts, Multi-Player Interaction and Halachic Re-organization of the Jewish 'Community' " is forthcoming in the European Review of History.

Bonna Devora Haberman, PhD, returned to Israel in 2004 with her spouse and five children, having taught at Brandeis and Harvard Universities. At Brandeis, she founded and directed the *Mistabra Institute for Jewish Textual Activism*. In Jerusalem, she is a lecturer and researcher at Hebrew University. Bonna initiated an Israeli movement for women's public participation and leadership, "Women of the Wall". Her Jewish feminist liberation theology is forthcoming: *Blood and Ink: Liberating Religion*. Having grown up in Canada, studied there, in the USA and England, she has been enlivening Jewish study with ethics, theater, and passion for social betterment.

Elena Gubenko was born in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine. She has an MA and professional experience in architecture. Elena is married, has two daughters and a 3 years old granddaughter. Upon giving birth to her first daughter in 1977, she was carried away by the alternative “pedagogic of joy”. Since then she thought painting, history of art, and applied arts in schools, kindergartens and summer camps. In 1993 she immigrated with her family to Gelsenkirchen, North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Germany, and since then is actively volunteering there in various spheres. In 2000 Elena created and ever since coordinates the Jewish Cultural Center KINOR. In 2006 KINOR earned Germany’s Federal Government prize for “Active Work for Democracy and Tolerance”. In 2008 Elena received the Gelsenkirchen “Migradonna” award for women actively working as volunteers in the field of migration politics and integration. For 16 years Elena does research in the field of Russian-Jewish immigration and the unique phenomenon of recovering Jewish life in post-war Germany.

Dorian Benedict Molhov, 1972, was born in a family of musicians. In 1991 he graduated a violin class at Sofia Musical School. His tutors were J. Attanassov, Rayna Manolova and Prof. Leon Surgeon. While studying he was a soloist with the Ladies' Chamber Orchestra "Sofia", with "Symphony" Orchestra at the Bulgarian National Radio and the Symphony Orchestra of the *Bulgarian State Conservatoire "Pancho Vladigerov"*. From 1991 till 1996 he studied in the Lozanna conservatoire in Switzerland and received a violin "*Virtuosity*" award upon graduating the class of Prof. Kristin Sorensen and chamber music from Prof. Erve Klopfenstein's class. From 1993 to 2001 he was assistant first-violinist of the "*Neuchattel Chamber Orchestra*". In 1993-1997 he was first violinist of the "*Neuchattel Chamber Orchestra*". In 1991-2001 he performed with many other orchestras: Symphony Orchestra Montreux; Chamber Orchestra Geneva; Symphoniette – Lozanna, etc. In 1995 he created the "*Art Quartet*", which had multiple performances in Switzerland, France and Germany and produced a CD in 1997. In 1998-2001 he conducted various symphony orchestras in Lozanna and Geneva. In 2002-2006 he was assistant first-violinist at "*Vienna Opera Scene*", H. Hellberg. In 2003-2006 worked with Symphoniette Sofia and the Symphony Orchestra of the *State Musical Academy "Pancho Vladigerov"*.

Eva Volitzer is a Bulgarian actress, singer and director. She has performed more than 50 roles in numerous Bulgarian theatres such as the Russe Drama Theatre, Sofia Itinerant Theatre, "Salza i Smyah" Theatre, etc. as well as internationally in Tel Aviv, Vienna, Riga, etc. She has also appeared in feature films, mostly in Bulgaria. She graduated from The National Academy of Theatrical and Film Arts "Krastyo Sarafov" with an MA degree in acting. She is an Associate Professor of acting in the New Bulgarian University, Sofia. Eva has produced numerous performances with youth dramatic studios and university students, and some of the productions have been presented in Switzerland, France, Austria, etc. Eva Volitzer was a Fulbright scholar in New York, USA, in 2002-2003 where she taught acting in Pace University, New York. In 1996 she published an album with 22 ancient Jewish songs in Ladino, which has been selling internationally. Eva Volitzer is the founder and director of the Independent "Gallery" Theater in Bulgaria. She is also an artistic director of the Jewish Keshet Theater in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Irene Runge, PhD, was born to intellectual German-Jewish immigrant parents in Manhattan, NY in 1942. The family left the US under the anticommunist McCarthy regime in 1949 and went to East Germany. Irene dropped school, worked with the media, took evening classes and finally studied Sociology and Economics at Humboldt University in East Berlin where she got her Ph.D. She started her Jewish activities in the early 80-ies and in 1986 founded the group "Jews for Jews" at the East Berlin Jewish Community Centre, which brought a change to East Berlin's Jewish life. In 1989/90 she was one of the founders of the Jüdische Kulturverein Berlin and later became president. She was instrumental to push the East German government to open the borders for Soviet Jewish immigration which started in May 1990. The Verein supported the immigrants from the beginning to the more or less end of immigration December 31, 2004 and till today and now hosts English speaking new Jewish immigrants, mostly young and creative. Irene specialized in social gerontology and cultural studies, published several books and numerous articles and continues to write mostly about migration, Jewish questions, racism, Islamophobia. She is married, has a son, a granddaughter and a 16 month old great-grandson.

Irina Chongarova-Aron, PhD, Assoc. Prof. was born in St. Petersburg, Russia (1962). She was educated at the University of Sofia, Bulgaria (M.A. in Russian Studies and English, 1985) and the Institute for Russian Language, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow (Ph.D.

in Philology, 1992). Irina Chongarova-Aron is a linguist by background but has developed lately wider social science interests. Her latest research and publications focus on Russian immigration to Bulgaria, mixed marriages, the identity of children with mixed heritage and their multilingual and intercultural potential. Irina Chongarova-Aron is an Associate Professor in Russian Cultural Studies; she lectures in Russian Cultural Studies and Intercultural Communication at the University of Plovdiv. Currently she is a research fellow at CRONEM (Centre for Research on Nationalism Ethnicity and Multiculturalism), Roehampton University – London. Over the last 10 years Irina Chongarova-Aron has developed an expertise in project management related to her research interests. She is an international expert, project evaluator and peer reviewer for local bodies and various European programs (TEMPUS, Lingua, Erasmus, Leonardo). She is a member of the Bulgarian Union of Scholars and a member of the Board of SIETAR-Bulgaria (Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research).

Iris Weiss studied pedagogic and social science. She works in different educational settings and teaches bibliodrama / bibliolog.

Hava Pinhas-Cohen is a poet, lecturer in literature and the arts, and a mother of four daughters. She lives in Jerusalem and works as the chief editor of *Dimui*, a journal of poetry, literature and Jewish culture. She has published seven collections of poetry that have earned numerous prizes: “*The Prime minister’s Prize*”, “*The Kugel Prize*” (awarded by the city of Holon), “*The ACUM Prize*” for the best poetry book of the year, as well as the “Alterman Prize”. In 2007, initiated “*Kisufim*” the Jerusalem conference of Jewish writers and since then she is the Artistic Director of the conference. Hava has participated in various festivals in Israel and abroad, and her poetry has been translated into English, French, Serbo-Croatian, Turkish, Chinese, Spanish . “*Door bet vleys stroomt bet verlangen*” , a collection of her Poems was translated to Dutch and published in Amphora Books publisher house in Amsterdam.

Hazzan Jalda Rebling got her ordination in January 2007 from ALEPH Alliance for Jewish Renewal. Jalda Rebling, cantor and actress, teaches in the traditions of the Maggidim, wandering from place to place, Jewish lore in stories and songs. She is a worldly wise specialist for Jewish music from medieval to modern times. She is specially appreciated for her interpretations of Yiddish songs and her pioneering work in research of Jewish medieval music. She led the international festival ‘Tage der Jiddischen Kultur’, a UNESCO project (1987-1997). She co-created the ‘Jiddisches Liedtheater’ in the Hackesche Hoftheater, Berlin. (1995-2006). Jalda is also the founder of ‘Ohel Hachidush’, a movement that endeavours to unite tradition with modernity and to renew Jewish life in Europe. She produced 9 CDs and LPs, worked for radio-, TV- and Theatre productions, well known at international Jewish music festivals and international congresses. Her last CDs are: *Juden in Deutschland 1250-1750* (1995); *An alter nign* (1997); *Juden im Mittelalter - aus Sepharad und Ashkenas* (1999); *Rajsele* (2004); *Kabbala* (2005)

Francine Zuckerman is a Canadian director, producer and writer. She graduated from McGill University’s film program and joined the National Film Board to co-produce and direct her first documentary film, the award winning ‘*Half the Kingdom*’. A controversial film about women and Judaism, ‘*Half the Kingdom*’ was invited to participate in more than twenty international film festivals; was broadcast on television. She produced and directed ‘*Exposure: environmental links to breast cancer*’, a documentary which explores the connection between environmental toxins and our physical health, hosted by singer/actor

Olivia Newton-John. Zuckerman then made the feature film Canada - New Zealand co-production *'Punch Me in the Stomach'*, starring Deb Filler. The film is based on Filler's 36-character off – Broadway solo performance piece. It is a story of the triumph of one man, a Polish born concentration camp survivor, as told by his comedienne daughter, Deb. Zuckerman directed and co-wrote and co-produced a short drama, *'Passengers'*, about a road trip a father and daughter take through time. *'Passengers'* had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and was invited to festivals in around the world. She co-produced and directed one in the Gemini nominated dramatic anthology TV series *'The Atwood Stories'*, based on the short stories of renowned Canadian author Margaret Atwood. Zuckerman's projects in development include: an adaptation of the ground-breaking novel by world renowned writer, Margaret Atwood, *'The Edible Woman'* and a sequel to her documentary film, *'Half the Kingdom'* entitled, *'The Kingdom behind the Curtain'* on women and Judaism in Poland, Hungary and East Germany.

Judith Kessler, M.A., is born in 1959, social scientist and chief editor of "Jüdisches Berlin" ("Jewish Berlin") magazine. She completed her secondary school education in Poland. The university degree in philology and literature was earned in East Germany; and the one in social science, psychology, and political science in West Germany. Employment at a refugee aid organisation; since 1990 employed at the Jewish Congregation of Berlin, focal point: integration of Jewish immigrants. Since 1998 she is editor of "Jüdisches Berlin" magazine. Additional work with translations as well as involvement in studies and publications on Jewish contemporary culture and Soviet-Jewish emigration, include: "From Aizenberg to Zaidelman. Jewish immigrants from East Europe and the Jewish Congregation today" (1995); "Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union since 1990. A study on 4000 immigrants", (1996); "The search for identity and subculture. Experiences of welfare work in the Jewish Congregation", (1999); and "The cultural and religious self-image of Berlin Jews. Results of the first congregational survey" (2002/2003). "The New German Jewry and the European Context" (2007).

Lara Dämmig studied library science in Berlin, Germany. Today she works for a Jewish organization in Berlin. She was an active member of the East Berlin Jewish Community. In the early 1990s she was instrumental in organizing a Rosh Chodesh group and an egalitarian minyan. She is involved in research on Jewish women's lives in Berlin, and is engaged in interreligious dialogue. She is one of the founders of Bet Debora and was an organizer of the conferences in 1999, 2001, and 2003 as well as co-editor of the Bet Debora Journals which document the conferences. She and Elisa Klapheck edited 'Bertha Pappenheim - Gebete/Prayers' (2003). Together with Judith Kessler she published 'Jüdisches im Grünen'.

Lika Eshkenazi graduated the Variety Department of the State Musical Academy in Sofia, Bulgaria, specializing in pop music vocal performance. The beginning of her vocal activity was related to the most prominent at the time musicians and gave her a good start for professional development. For years she fittingly represented the Bulgarian variety school abroad. In recent years Lika devoted herself to Jewish songs and makes it popular among the Jewish and general public. Lika has performed in Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Greece, Israel and Bulgaria. She is a prize-winner at many festivals in Bulgaria and abroad. She performed as soloist in many musical formations and in all the Balkan Jews "Esperansa" festivals. She has published more than five CDs of Jewish songs among which *"Yo me enamori d'un aire"* and *"Skalerika de oro"*. In 2004 she created the vocal formation *"Dulce Canto"* (*"Sweet Song"*). It had immediate success: a month or so after its inception *"Dulce Canto"* explodingly agitated the audience of the "Esperansa" Festival in Belgrade, Serbia. The formation managed

to attract many admirers. Followed concerts in Sofia and other Bulgarian cities and many other festival participations and a CD of the formation was recently published. In the last year Lika received two prestigious awards for her entire artistic activity from the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture and the Bulgarian Jewish Community.

Marija Salom is an experienced architect of Belgrade, Serbia. Her general social and professional knowledge is combined with knowledge and good understanding of Jewish heritage and values. She lived for a while in Israel and further acquired Jewish knowledge and understanding in Paideia, Stockholm, The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden., where she was a fellow in 2004-2005. In 2006 she did a research for the Rappaport Center, Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv, Israel. In 2007 she led two seminars in the Jewish community, Belgrade and in 2008 was a co-organizer of Limud Keshet, Belgrade In 2009 she lectured on Jews in Serbia and Judaism in the Faculty of Philosophy and Faculty of Political Science at the University of Belgrade, Serbia.

Michal Ben Ya'akov, PhD, holds a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison (1972), and M.A. (1984) and a Ph.D. (2001) from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her academic work centers around 19th and 20th century Eretz-Israel, with special emphasis on North African and Sephardi Jewry. In recent years she has focused on Jewish women, particularly, but not exclusively in those communities. Dr. Ben Ya'akov has taught at various high schools and colleges in Israel, as well as in-service workshops for teachers. Since 1989 she has been a senior lecturer in modern history at the Efrata College of Education in Jerusalem, and since 2005 chairperson of the department. She has lectured widely in Israel and abroad, and has published numerous articles. Her research on North African immigration and settlement in Israel will soon be published by the Yitzhak Ben Zvi Institute, Jerusalem.

Mira Katzburg Yungman, PhD from the Department of History at the Open University of Israel is a researcher of American Zionism and the History of Jewish women. She is the author of *American Zionist Women in America – Hadassah the Rebirth of Israel* (Hebrew, 2008) published by Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel of Ben-Gurion University. The book will also be published in English by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization (Oxford). Dr. Katzburg Yungman is the editor and author of the series of sources and articles, *The American Jewish Experience* (2 vols. of sources and articles mostly translated into Hebrew with extensive introductions and an English vol. of articles) published by the Open University of Israel and Zalman Shazar Center for the History of the Jewish People. She has published articles dealing with the history of Zionism, particularly the history of American Zionism, and has written and edited other publications on the history of American Jews

Nelly Sand was born in Sofia in 1952. In 1982 she graduated Graphic Design at the National Fine Arts Academy in Sofia. Nelly has participated in more than ten Joint Art Presentations and Expositions and has about seven individual exhibitions. She works in the field of advertisement, newspapers' and journal's graphic design, etc. In her creative work the focus of her interest is mainly in searching for historically important personalities, especially from the history of Bulgarian Jews. Nelly is also involved in literature and has written and published a number of short stories, one of which was translated in Italian and awarded a Ministry of Culture Prize. Being theater and artistically minded, she has lately outstandingly interpreted a role in the Rich Orloff's performance "Oy!" staged and directed by Eva Volitzer for the 2009 Jewish Keshet Theatre season in Sofia.

Norma Baumel Joseph is Associate Professor of Religion at Concordia University and Graduate Program Director and Director of the Women and Religion specialization. Her teaching and research areas include women and Judaism, Jewish law and ethics, and women and religion. Norma received her doctorate from Concordia University in 1995. Dr. Joseph is a specialist in women and Judaism, their historical experience and the legal texts that encompass them. Her doctoral dissertation focused on the legal decisions of Rabbi Moses Feinstein as they describe and delineate separate spheres for women in the Jewish community. She has authored numerous articles, chapters and encyclopedia articles on gender and Jewish law. While continuing her work on Jewish law and gender, Dr. Joseph has added an anthropological study on food, identity and gender to her repertoire. In 2002, she edited a collection on gender, food and survival in Judaism. Dr. Joseph lectures and publishes on many topics. Over the years she has held numerous grants supporting this research. She currently is studying the effects of food and gender on the identity and adaptation of an Iraqi Jewish community living in Montreal. Norma appeared in and was consultant to the films *Half The Kingdom* and *Untying the Bonds...Jewish Divorce*. Since the early 1970's Norma has promoted women's greater participation in Jewish religious and communal life. Founding member of the *Canadian Coalition of Jewish Women for the Get* (Jewish divorce), Dr. Joseph successfully worked with the community and the Federal Government to pass a law in 1990 (Divorce Act, ch.18, 21.1) that would protect Jewish women in difficult divorce situations and aid them in their pursuit of a Jewish divorce.

Ruth Mastron is vice-president of SoCoCo Intercultural (<http://www.sococo.com>). She first developed her intercultural skills while studying and working in England and France, where her senior research project was an ethnographic study of proverbs relating to food and cooking in the Gascon culture in Southwestern France. She teaches corporate French language and culture programs. Ruth works with clients in the high-tech and IT areas, as well as industries as diverse as hospitality, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, government and agribusiness. In addition, she has done projects for French and international schools. She has been a speaker for organizations such as the Alliance Française (National Speakers Bureau), the French-American Chamber of Commerce and Meeting Professionals International. She provides training and coaching for European employees and their families moving to the US, and for US American employees and their families moving abroad. She also trains intercultural project teams and teaches adult education through the Osher Institute at California State University, San Marcos. With Gilles Asselin, she is co-author of "Au Contraire! Figuring Out the French" (<http://www.interculturalpress.com>), "Cultural Detective: France" (<http://www.culturaldetective.com>) and "Français - Américains: Ces différences qui nous rapprochent" (<http://www.alban.fr>). Her latest publication is "Cultural Detective: Jewish Culture", which she co-authored with Bruce Bierman and K. Pica Kahn. In 2003, Ruth worked as a Peace Writer for the Women Peace Makers Program at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego. Ruth lives in Oceanside, California, with a French husband and two bilingual cats.

Ruth Rosenfelder, PhD, is visiting Lecturer in Jewish Music Studies at City University, London. She also lectures on music at the London Jewish Cultural Centre. Her early training was as a pianist, studying with Julius Isserlis and later with Franz Reizenstein at the Royal Academy of Music, London where she gained her LRAM, after which she taught and performed for some years. She studied for an MA when the Jewish Music course was established at City University and went on to complete her PhD which examines the music of women in the strictly religious Hasidic community in London.

S.L. (Sandi) Wisenberg was born in Houston, Texas, lives in Chicago, and writes about Jewish identity and history. Her grandparents were from Moldova, Lithuania and Belarus. This spring the University of Iowa Press published her book, “The Adventures of Cancer Bitch,” based on her blog, <http://cancerbitch.blogspot.com>. She’s also written an essay collection, “Holocaust Girls: History, Memory & Other Obsessions” (University of Nebraska Press); and a short story collection, “The Sweetheart Is In” (Northwestern University Press). (Holocaust Girls is her term for people—such as herself-- who did experience the Holocaust, but identify with it too strongly.) She co-directs the MA/MFA in Creative Writing program at Northwestern University, where she is also a visiting scholar in Gender Studies. She is a former reporter for the Miami Herald and has published work in many magazines and anthologies, including Lilit, Tikkun, Moment and the New Yorker, “Neurotica: Jewish Writers on Sex,” “Nice Jewish Girls: Growing Up in America,” and “When Night Fell: An Anthology of Holocaust Short Stories.” She has received grants and awards from the state arts council and US National Endowment for the Humanities, and has read her work at many universities and conferences and on the radio.

Sandra Lustig (Hamburg), is a freelance translator, editor and interpreter. Member of the Executive Committee of Bet Debra for the 2009 conference in Sofia, Bulgaria. Instrumental in organizing the conference "Galut 2000 -- Towards a European Jewish Identity" in 1998, one of the first conferences on the subject. Founder of the Jewish Stammtisch Berlin. Publications include: "*Turning the Kaleidoscope. Perspectives on European Jewry*" (Berghahn Books: Oxford/New York, 2006/2008); 'Alternatives to "Jewish Disneyland,"' in: J. Purchla, M. Murzyn (eds.), *Przywracanie pamieci. Rewitalizacja zabytkowych dzielnic zydowskich w miastach Europy Srodkowej* (Memory reclaimed. Urban regeneration in the historic Jewish quarters in Central Europe) (ICC: Cracow, 2008, pp. 81-96, in Polish translation; English edition in press). She holds a Master's in Public Affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, and a Diplom in Urban and Regional Planning from the Technische Universität Berlin.

Selma Todorova (Sofia) has graduated the Bulgarian Academy of Fine Arts in 1989 from Professor Ivan Gazdov’s master class. She is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Artists. Selma has more than 15 individual exhibitions of her paintings. Some of her works were exhibited under the patronage of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Ministry of Culture, the American and the Israeli Embassies. She has participated in many joint expositions and plenary workshops in Bulgaria and abroad. Her paintings are owned by many private collections in Bulgaria, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Greece, France, Israel, Macedonia, Poland, Russia, Norway and USA. She was awarded an Expo’91 Golden Medal in Plovdiv.

Sergei Ivoylov’s paintings are characterized by spouting vitality, psychological analysis and philosophical depth; they combine the masterly technique of classical realism with the sharp-witted vision of a contemporary man. He was born in 1922 in Oryahovo, but his life was mainly related to Sofia and Paris. In *Sofia*, he graduated the Bulgarian Fine Arts Academy, with the Class of Professor Iliya Petrov; he became member of the Union of Bulgarian Artists and worked as a teacher in painting at the National Fine Arts Gymnasium and the Fine Arts Academy. Subsequently he became a free lanced painter. He worked in *Paris* for 15 years between 1989–2009 and became member of the Union of French Artists „*La Maison des artistes*”; he is a regular participant of the Autumn Salon. Along with his author contributions, he is a copyist in the Louvre. He was awarded a *Golden Medal* for a copy of the Rafael picture, “*The Beautiful Gardner Woman*”, and a Silver Medal for the “*Portrait of a Girl*” at the same exhibition. Sergei was also awarded the Golden Medal of Vilmomble. He is a

member of the Belgium International Academy for Contemporary Art, which awarded him the “*Golden Palm Officer*” Prize.

Simeon Krystev has graduated the Bulgarian Academy of Fine Arts in 1975 with a specialization in fine art and graphic design. He is author of hundreds of posters, stamps, company logos, protected graphic symbols, catalogues and books. Simeon has many individual and joint exhibitions of fine art and poster works. Lately his paintings were exhibited in Paris and Tel Aviv along with the works of nine other Bulgarian artists of Jewish origin. Many of his paintings are owned by private galleries and private collections. He has many upcoming painting and graphic design works.

Svetlana Jacque Avdala was born in Russe, Bulgaria. She holds an MA in Musicology with post-graduate specializations in Journalism, Mass-Communication and Film & TV Directing. From 1987 till 2002 she worked in BTV as a reporter, writer, executive producer and director in the fields of music, folklore, ethnography, culture and education. From 2002 to 2006 she worked as a free lance Director and Writer. As of 2006 she works as a curator in the Pancho Vladigerov Museum House. Svetlana is author of a number of documentaries, educational films and series such as “Piano Album”, “Ritual and Music”, portrait films featuring Pancho Vladigerov, Georgi Rube, Peter Stupel, Ivelin Dimitrov, Vasko Vassilev, Constantine Iliev, Razvigor Popov and Mimi Ivanova, Boncho and Lilyana Bochevi, Karlheinz Stockhausen, a film series about puppet theatre directors and actors, documentaries featuring national and international festivals as Sofia Music Weeks, New Years Music Festival, Music Nova Festival, Pianissimo, etc. She participated in a number of International Film Festivals and holds prestigious awards as Golden Antenna Award from 50 Years Sofia Music Weeks (1995); Award at International Documentary Film Festival in Latvia for the film “Panchovek” (1996); Eight Muse Award for musical forms in Pianissimo 2002 (2002)

Rabbi Sybil Sheridan was born in Bolton, UK. In 1973-76 she studied Theology and Religious Studies at <http://cancerbitch.blogspot.com> Cambridge University. In 1976-81 she studied for rabbinic ordination at Leo Baeck College, London. In 1978-80 she studied in Jerusalem at Machon Pardes and Hebrew University. In 1981-85 she was Rabbi at Ealing Liberal Synagogue. In 1988 – 2002 she lectured at Leo Baeck College. In 1994- 2002 she was Rabbi at Thames Valley Progressive Jewish Community. In 2002 became Rabbi at Wimbledon and District Synagogue. Rabbi Sheridan is author of “Stories from the Jewish World”. She edited “Hear Our Voice: Women Rabbis Tell their Stories”. With Sylvia Rothschild she edited “*Taking up the Timbrel: The Challenge of Creating Ritual for Jewish Women Today*”. She is contributor to a number of books on Bible, Judaism and comparative religion, the latest of which is three chapters on Abraham, Jesus and Gender in “Abraham’s Children: Jews Christians and Muslims in Conversation”, editors: Richard Harries, Norman Solomons, Timothy Winter. Sybil Sheridan lectured extensively and was a keynote speaker at the first Beit Debora Conference in Berlin “On Women in the Rabbinate”.

Talin Bahcivanoglu, an Armenian from Turkey, was born in Istanbul. She has been living in Germany since 1974 and in Berlin since 1991. After completing vocational training as a retail saleswoman, she earned her university entry qualifications in night school, and then studied social work in Frankfurt am Main and political science in Berlin. She worked in various women's projects for more than ten years and is now active in the field of migration and education. In 2006, she, Uschi Logar and Kristina Vaillant were awarded a prize by the integration project "Berliner Tulpe" for their project "Vorbilder machen Mut." Talin also leads individual cultural trips to Turkey. Together with Lara Dämmig, she has initiated

Jewish-Armenian dialogue in the form of joint cooking sessions. She is currently working on institutionalizing Jewish-Armenian dialogue in workshop form at the Department of European Ethnology of the Humboldt University, Berlin. Talin is married and has two children.

Tania Reytan-Marincheshka, PhD, is born in Plovdiv, lived, studied and worked in Bulgaria, Russia, and USA. She holds an MA in International Relations and a PhD in Political Philosophy. Tania specialized in International Law, Philosophy of Law, Sociology and Human Rights. In the 1980's and 1990's she was a human rights activist. From 1993 till 2001 she created and directed a joint UNHCR/BHC program and a network on "Refugees' and Migrants' Protection". In 2000 she created and is still involved with the 'Association on Refugees and Migrants'. Since 2000 she performs scholarly research and publishes in the fields of migration, urban studies, communication, civil participation, social justice and coexistence. In 2001-2002, she was a scholar-in-residence at HBI, Brandeis University, USA. From 2003 till 2007 she taught HR & IR at Sofia University. In 2008, she was a visiting professor at Utica College, NY, USA. Since 2003 she is a member of the European Bet Debora movement and organized the 5th Bet Debora Conference, 2009 in Sofia. Currently she works in the Institute for Philosophical Research, BAS.

Tanya Ury is a British-German artist, writer and curator, born in London in 1951. She studied fine art at Exeter College of Art and Design from 1985 to 1988. 1990 she graduated in Master of Fine Arts at Reading University. From 1991 to 1992 she was a guest lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University, with the Colin Walker Fellowship in Fine Art. Since 1993 she has been living and working in Cologne, Germany. Most of her family lived here before having to flee into exile to London because of their Jewish origins. As a writer and in her photography, installations, performance and video art Tanya Ury deals with questions of Judeo-German identity, the handling of German society with its history, the role of subaltern women against the background of migration and racism. Prostitution, voyeurism and the Holocaust are issues in a large number of her works.

Toby Axelrod, born in 1956, is both a New Yorker and a Berliner. A long-time journalist, she left the "Big Apple" 12 years ago for Berlin, Germany on a Fulbright fellowship, and since then has been working there as a freelance writer and translator. She has written extensively on such themes as the confrontation with the history of the Holocaust in Germany and the growth of Jewish life in Germany today, primarily for Jewish media. She has attended all four previous Bet Debora conferences and covered them for Jewish media. Currently she is chair of Limmud in Germany (www.limmud.de).