

The Jabnean Academy: Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's Proposal to Found a Modern Academy of the Jewish People

Herşcovici, Lucian-Zeev

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*UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY:
POLITICAL AND IDENTITY STAKES
HISTOIRE INSTITUTIONNELLE UNIVERSITAIRE:
ENJEUX POLITIQUES ET IDENTITAIRES
ISTORIE INSTITUȚIONALĂ UNIVERSITARĂ:
INTERESE POLITICE ȘI IDENTITARE*

**THE JABNEAN ACADEMY: RABBI DR. JACOB ISAAC
NIEMIROWER'S PROPOSAL TO FOUND
A MODERN ACADEMY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE***

LUCIAN-ZEEV HERȘCOVICI

Abstract (The Jabnean Academy: Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's Proposal to Found a Modern Academy of the Jewish People): The aim of this article is to present and to analyze Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's idea of the necessity of founding a modern Academy of the Jewish people in Jerusalem and his proposal and project for its foundation. When and why did Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower get this idea? What should be the function and purpose of the academy? What should its fields of research be, and who should belong to it? Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower, a "cultural Zionist", proposed the idea of the foundation of a modern Academy of the Jewish people, which he called "*the Jabnean Academy*" or an Academy of "*Pan-Judaism*" in an article published in a journal in 1899. He enlarged his proposal in several other articles in various journals and booklets, published in German, Hebrew and Romanian, between 1902-1919. Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's proposal was aimed at leaders of the Zionist Movement, Jewish intellectuals and wealthy Jews who could support the project. His proposal did not win much support as it was probably ahead of its times. However, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's proposal was kept alive by some Jewish leaders from Romania, one of them being Moritz Schweig, who in 1932 was proud that the idea of founding a modern Jewish Academy in Palestine was that of a Romanian Jew.

Keywords: Cultural history; Jewish history; Jewish Academy; Jabnean Academy; Zionism; Jacob Isaac Niemirower; Moritz Schweig.

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's Life and Work

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac (*Yakov Yitzhak*) Niemirower was one of the most important leaders of the Romanian Jewry in the first half of the 20th century. He

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was a modern liberal (i.e. a moderate Reform) rabbi, Chief Rabbi, political leader, and a philosopher of Judaism.

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower was born in Lemberg, Galicia (now: Lviv, Ukraine) in 1872, as the only son of a merchant from a rabbinic family, Nathan Niemirower. His mother descended from the Margosches and Reitzes families. The parents had relatives in Iași, Romania and moved to this town when Jacob Isaac was a child. There he received a traditional Jewish education from Rabbi Mendel Barasch, and from his grandfather, Rabbi Samuel (*Shmuel*) Niemirower. Later he came under the influence of the rationalist trend, read Jewish medieval and modern literature and philosophy, such as Maimonides' *Guide to the perplexed*, Judah Halevy's *Kuzary*, Nachman Krochmal's *Guide to the perplexed of our times*, and became interested in general philosophic studies and modern Jewish theology. When he was 13 years old, influenced by the Haskalah ideology, Jacob Isaac Niemirower learned the Latin alphabet and began to study secular subjects in German. He left for Berlin in 1890, where he passed his graduation examination and began studies at the local university, taking courses in philosophy, history, literature, oriental studies and economics. In 1895 he received his Ph.D. at Bern University (Switzerland), defending the thesis – *The correlation between free choice, conscience, reward and punishment* –, written under the supervision of Professor Ludwig Stein. Niemirower also studied at the Neo-Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin, receiving the rabbinical title from Rabbi Abraham Bieberfeld in 1896. His liberal ideas, however, led him in the direction of Reform Judaism, receiving the rabbinical title from Rabbi Michael Hamburger of Mecklemburg-Strolitz in the same year. In 1896 he married Fany Margulies, a doctor of law from Bruxelles University. In December 1896, Niemirower returned to Iași as the preacher of the Neuschotz Reform Temple (“*Beyth Yakov*”). At first he was rejected by the Orthodox rabbis and Chassidic Jews of Iași. Later on, however, they warmed to him due to his successful public lectures, sermons and Torah lessons, as well as articles in local journals. Although he was not accepted as *Halakhic* authority, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower became the main rabbi of Iași in 1908. From 1912 he served as rabbi of the Sephardic (Judeo-Spanish) community of Bucharest, until his election as rabbi of the newly founded Jewish Ashkenazi community and of the Union of the Jewish communities from the Old Kingdom of Romania in 1921. From 1936 he served as Chief Rabbi of the Federation of Unions of Jewish Communities of Greater Romania, until his death in November 1939. He was the first Chief Rabbi of Romanian Jewry, recognized in this function by the state authorities. In 1927 Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower became the representative of the Mosaic Religion in the Romanian Senate, where he served until his death (Sanie 2014; Samoilă 2010; Herșcovici 2005; Tercatin & Herșcovici 2008; Iancu 2000; Geller 1985; Rosen 1971).

Politically, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower identified with the Union of Romanian Jews, led by Wilhelm Filderman (Filderman, 1999, I, 554-568). His general orientation was liberal. However, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower was also a Zionist and he visited Palestine as the head of a delegation of the leaders of the Zionists of Romania in April 1938 (Koren et al. 2005, 20-26). However, his Zionism was different: it was a “cultural Zionism”, founded on his “cultural Judaism”. Niemirower’s “cultural Zionism” was influenced by Achad Haam’s “cultural Zionism” and by Simon Dubnow’s “cultural Territorialism”. Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower called his Zionism “*Jabneism*”. According to him, it was a part of intellectual Zionism. Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower wanted to create a synthesis of Judaism, choosing the beautiful and rational elements in order to unite various philosophical-theological aspects, with the contemporary social, political and cultural reality. In his opinion, cultural Judaism is a union of Jewish tradition and philosophy with modern non-Jewish philosophy, adapted to the conditions of modern civilization. Judaism is more a culture than a religion and the Jews are both a people and a religious group within which it is impossible to differentiate between the people and the religion. The role of the rabbi should be cultural and not ritual. Jewish cultural life should be led by a “*Jabnean Academy*”, which should be founded in Jerusalem; its function should be the cultural renaissance of Judaism (Herşcovici 2007, 67-69).

“Jabneism” as a Political and Cultural Trend

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower’s idea of “*Jabneism*” was influenced by the thesis of S. Bernfeld, Achad Haam (Asher Ginsburg) and Simon Dubnow. In an essay published in 1914, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower quoted the thesis of Simon Bernfeld, according to which “*by Judaism we mean the totality of all the products of the Jewish spirit, produced by it over the 4000 years of the existence of the Jewish people*” (Niemirower 1919, II, 260). Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower spoke about Jewish pluralism, the coexistence of religious, national, political and social Judaism, which is a “*Pan-Judaism in the general culture, that appears in various forms, according to the background and the period of development of the various groups in Israel*”, called by him “*Jabneism*” (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 260-261). Although a disciple of Achad Haam, the father of the “cultural Zionism” with its centre in Palestine, Niemirower was influenced by Simon Dubnow’s thesis who affirmed that the Jews must appear in the Diaspora as a separate entity, as a cultural nation refusing to attach the fate of Judaism to Palestine only. Confronted with these two points of view, Niemirower adds a third, his idea of *Jabneism*. “*Jabneism has in common with Dubnow’s theory of spiritual nationalism the fact that it*

places a higher value on the spiritual part of Judaism than on its political part and a higher value on the general part of the Judaic spirit than on its purely religious part... What Zion is for political Zionism, Jabneh should be for cultural Zionism... We cannot be satisfied anymore with a formal Judaism, but want a spiritual Judaism. Cultural Zionism asks us to be conscious of what we were and what we can yet be" (Niemirower 1919, II, 260-262).

Accordingly, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's aim was the salvation of Judaism, that is, Jewish culture, by means of Jabneism, patterned on the "academy of Jabneh" (*Yavneh*) of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkay after the Roman conquest of Jerusalem and agreed upon by the commander of the Roman army. In this manner Judaism was saved after it lost its political power. The term "*Jabneism*" originates in the name of the town "*Jabneh*" (*Yavneh*) in Palestine, which became the spiritual centre founded by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkay, a pacifist scholar who was able to foresee the future. "Jabneh" became the symbol of Jewish culture (Herșcovici 2007, 76-77).

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower tried to unite the political nation with the spiritual nation. He was convinced that Dubnow's point of view was correct theoretically, but difficult to put into practice. This belief caused him to combine these two points of view and to propose a middle course. Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower went even further, proposing the foundation of a *modern Jabnean Academy* in Jerusalem (Herșcovici 2007, 10).

The Proposal for a Modern Jabnean Academy in Jerusalem

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower proposed the founding of a modern Jabnean Academy in a Romanian-language article published in the Jewish journal *Răsăritul* in Iași in 1899. Later, in 1902, he expanded his idea in an article written in German but published in a Jewish-Romanian review, *Lumea Israelită*, also in Iași (Niemirower 2005, 277). For this reason, his idea was not sufficiently disseminated, although some personalities pronounced various opinions about it, as the author wrote later, in 1909 (Niemirower 1909, 3). Although the proposal was received with skepticism and ironical criticism, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower continued to believe that his project was acceptable and workable (Niemirower 1909, 3). Niemirower tried to convince leaders of the Zionist Organization of the possibility of his project. He referred to the fact that a Hebrew gymnasium operated in Palestine, a National Library of the Jewish people existed in Jerusalem, and Jewish universities existed in America and insisted on the necessity of a Jewish Academy. He also wrote that "*Dr. Singer of New York and the writer R. Brainin also pleaded for this institution... It is not an Utopia of the scholars, but ... a categorical necessity of our development to create a spiritual centre, a higher institution which can*

represent all Jewish people" (Schidorsky 1990, 183-242; Schidorsky 2013, 1-3; Niemirower 2005, 278). In 1909, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower expanded his proposal, probably influenced by his participation in the Zionist Congress of Basel (1905) and of Hague (1907) (Iancu 2009, 265). He published a series of articles about it in the Jewish-Romanian journal *Egalitatea* (Bucharest, 1909), in Romanian, and in German in Vienna, in the review *Oesterreichischer Wochenschrift* and also as a booklet in the same year (Niemirower 1909, 38-42). Wanting to disseminate his proposal among East-European Jews, Niemirower published a Hebrew-language translation (by Menachem-Mendel Braunstein-Mibashan) of the Romanian-language articles also as a booklet, in Botoșani, Romania in 1913, with a preface by the translator (Niemirower 1913). In this preface he presents a biography of Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower and his idea of founding a "*Jabnean Academy*" in Jerusalem (Braunstein-Mibashan 1913, 3-7).

Menachem-Mendel Braunstein-Mibashan was a known translator from Romanian to Hebrew, a Hebrew language writer, and a teacher of Hebrew (Herșcovici 2009, I: 920-924); the title-page states that it's "*Hotzaath Chowewey Sefath Ever*". Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower was also Mibashan's younger friend. Previously, Niemirower's articles were published in Hebrew, in the same translation of Mibashan, in the journal *Hamitzpeh*, in 1910. The author and the translator hoped that the idea would be disseminated and accepted; they also believed that even if some people criticized it, this would be for the better (Braunstein-Mibashan 1913, 7). It was a way to spread Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's idea: in Hebrew, in a booklet presented to the Zionist Congress, and in German, in a booklet published in Austria. Probably, the outbreak of World War I caused the idea to be buried into oblivion. But not only as historical conditions also determined this. An academy could be founded in Jerusalem only after the founding of a university, and the Hebrew University was founded only in 1925. Scholars and students came to Palestine little by little (Seltzer 2013, *passim*).

However, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's idea was not buried into oblivion in Romania. In 1919, the Romanian version of the text was republished in his *Complete Works* ("*Scieri complecte*"), volume 2 – "*Disertații și foiletoane*". In the foreword to volume I of Niemirower's *Complete Works* (1932), the communitarian leader Moritz Schweig was proud that the idea of the founding of a Jewish Academy in Jerusalem was that of a Romanian Jew. Later (2005), the text of the Romanian version was republished in an anthology of Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's writings (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 291-318; Niemirower, I, 1919-1932; Niemirower 2005, 277-295).

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower's proposal contained five points: "1- *The central Israelite Academy as an expression of our cultural and socio-political development*; 2- *On the basis of Jabnean Pan-Judaism*; 3 – *With the mission of the cultural unity of all Jews and of all the historical periods of the people of Israel*; 4 – *To reflect the necessities of the present, the traditions of the*

past and the aspirations of the future; 5 – To be founded by a commission representing all the great organizations of the Jews” (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 293-294; Niemirower 1913, 8). These points are mentioned in the Romanian and Hebrew versions. The German version also presents three additional points: “*The evolution of the Academy, The literary-scientific program, The cultural program*” (Niemirower 1909, 3-4). In the Romanian and Hebrew versions, these points are included in the text, together with other aspects. It is possible that Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower preferred to present them in greater detail for the German language audience. However, in our article we used mainly the Romanian and Hebrew versions.

“The Central Israelite Academy as an Expression of our Cultural and Social-Political Development”, Based on Pan-Judaic Jabneism

In Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower’s opinion, the foundation of a Central Israelite Academy was a consequence of the cultural and social-political development of the Jewish people at the end of 19th – beginning of the 20th century. Its foundation was a cultural and socio-political necessity. Dealing with the contemporary condition of Jewish culture, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower emphasized the development of Hebrew and Yiddish literature as well as the ignorance of Judaic subjects in Germany, the home of Jewish studies. The religious differences of the Jews are also emphasized by Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower, who mentions the linguistic differences among contemporary Jews, speakers of Hebrew, three popular Jewish dialects, and six European languages, and also the difference between Jewish political groups. Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower was an expert in Jewish life, society and culture. He speaks about the necessity of unity in dispersion of the people of Israel in 1902. Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower speaks about ethnic Jews and cultural Jews, religious and non-religious Jews – all of whom represent a spiritual nation. Their common element is the culture. “*The cultural element is... an important factor... and for this reason it may become the foundation corner-stone of a conscious unification of the people of Israel*” (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 301). Concerning religious, social, political, cultural and linguistic differences among Jews, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower emphasizes the necessity of unification of all the groups, using the term “*Pan-Judaism*”, inspired by the terms “Pan-Germanism” and “Pan-Slavism”. The “*Pan-Judaism*” must include all aspects of Jewish life and culture. This concept must be the foundation of the modern Jabnean Academy of the Jewish people. This academy must represent “*the Jabnean Pan-Judaism*” or “*the Pan-Judaic Jabneism*” (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 298). In order to represent each aspect of Jewish life and culture by the Jabnean Academy, Niemirower used the Romanian Academy as an example.

“The judgment of history is expressed for Priests or for Prophets; for Hellenists or for Sadducees; for Zealots or for the Pacifist Party; for the school of Hillel and for the school of Shammai; for Rabbanites and for Karaites; for the disciples of Maimonides or for his adversaries; for Kabbalists and for Rationalists; for Chassidim and for Mitnaggedim; for Reformers and for Orthodox; for assimilationists and for nationalists. The science of Judaism must deal with all these aspects with the same impartiality. In a word, the mission of the cultural union of all the Jews corresponds to the union of all the historical periods of Israel. This mission is of the centralized academy. Other academies also have trends of unification. The Romanian Academy, for example, also aims for the spiritual unification of all the branches of the Romanian people dispersed in various states, through the unification of the Romanian language and literature” (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 302).

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower presents his conception of an Israelite Academy, by comparing it with some historical academies and with the tradition of the Jewish people. *“An Israelite Academy must be an academy sui-generis, because Israel is a people sui-generis, an original mixture of confession, nationality and culture. We are a confession without a fixed dogma, a religion to which faith takes second place, a nationality which did not own its historical territory in a political sense, a culture with various languages, a form of international ethnic society, which is the ethnic people in the same time. All the designations of our people are relative... So is it also with the institution that we visualize. The name, the modern **Synagoga Magna** may be correct. But we want to use the word **Academy**, in order to specify the cultural and modern moment. Under the title **Academy** many things may be understood. Beginning with the Platonic Academy, history knows of five academies in Antiquity. Taking into consideration the Museum of Alexandria, the Academy of Rome, that of the Renaissance times, the Institute of France, and other academies, there are different forms. Now, we know of the academy as a society of scholars, and also as a higher school, for special subjects, such as the School of War, of Theology, of Music... The Jabnean Academy shall also be a society of scholars, with many aims, on different subjects. The Jabnean Academy shall not be a higher school, but it must be a society that will found various higher schools” (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 302-303).*

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower maintained that *“in comparison with the character of the people of Israel, his Academy must have religious, national, spiritual, scientific, literary, and artistic tasks”*. He added that *“a Jabnean Academy cannot be a religious synod. An authoritarian opinion, a decision of the majority, a venerable tradition has an important role in the religious field, but the liberty of conscience, the right of the minority, the independence of criticism are sacrosanct... Religious questions in which there are divergences of opinions are excluded at the beginning in the Jabnean Academy, which may not be used by the Orthodox, and not by the Reform party... The Jabnean*

Academy may have a religious commission, a form of synedrion, including the representatives of every religious branch orientation, with the aim of expressing the common questions for all the Jews". Also, "the Jabnean Academy cannot have a political character... it shall not be a Jewish Parliament... The Jabnean Academy cannot be a Palestinian Academy only. Its central seat must be in Jerusalem, this being the requirement of history... But the pure Palestinian work must be done by a special institution, because the Central Academy cannot lose sight of all the people of Israef" (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 303-305).

Believing in the necessity of the cultural unity of the people of Israel, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower, a European Jew and an intellectual of Jewish and general culture, mentioned that *"the Jabnean Academy cannot have a pure Hebrew character. The cultivation, the dissemination of the Hebrew language must occupy a great place in the Academy, because this language is an element of the union of all the Jews... but the Central Academy is in the service of Jewish culture expressed in other languages also".* In this case, Niemirower rejects the theory of Achad Haam of "Hebrew exclusivism": although he says that *"we appreciate Achad Haam's idea, that the Hebrew Palestine may become a centre of life for all the people of Israel... we put the hope in a universal institution with general Jewish aims"* (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 305). In this case, Niemirower's affirmation expresses not only the idea of a modern Jabnean Academy, but also a central idea of the Jabnean trend, the form of Zionism and cultural Judaism proposed by him.

The Program of the "Jabnean Academy"

Concerning the program of the "Jabnean Academy", Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower refers to several aspects: the literary program, the cultural program, and the practical program.

Where did Niemirower think scientific studies fit into the Jabnean Academy? Here, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower speaks as a Jewish *maskil*: influenced by the philosopher Ludwig Geiger, Niemirower writes that the sciences do not have a Jewish character, other than the science of Judaism. He also notes that it would be important to study the history of the participation of the Jews in the development of various sciences, and also to apply the method of critical analysis to the science of Judaism in the field of literature. But – adds Niemirower, – *"I do not consider that the results of the application of those methods should constitute the science of Judaism. The natural sciences are free of national or confessional ethnicity of the researchers. The ethnic and religious moment has a role only in the humanities... Science proper cannot have a prominent place in a Jabnean Academy... It has a certain place...because in our times philosophy considers the results of the natural sciences, and for this*

reason, Jewish philosophers must conciliate our theology with modern science" (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 305-306).

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower places special emphasis on Jewish studies in the future Jabnean Academy. In his opinion, *"the science of Judaism is closely connected to Hebrew and Jewish literature, so that the Jabnean Academy must become a literary academy"*. Of course, he asks himself what belongs to the *"Israelite literature"*. He answers that *"the Israelite literature is all that expresses the Judaic spirit and thought"*, written in Hebrew as well as in various Jewish vernacular idioms, or in other languages. *"But if a literary work is not Jewishly inspired, consciously or unconsciously, even if it is written by a Jew and in Hebrew, it doesn't belong to our literature... In any case, a society of scholars and artists, members of the academy, would we able to decide"*. Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower also mentions that some literary works belong to two nations at the same time, e.g. Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza's works, written in Latin, belong to universal literature, as well as to the philosophical works of the Judaic literature and Heinrich Heine's works belong to the German and Jewish literature also (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 307).

Concerning Jewish art, *"which is very new"*, Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower notices that it needs the support of a higher cultural institution. But he adds that *"the Jabnean Academy cannot be an academy of art in the sense of a higher school, but an institution which shows the way for the Jewish art"*. Niemirower also adds that *"we hope that an Israelite Academy shall develop this new branch of the cultural field of the Jewish people"* (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 308).

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower also mentions his hope concerning the aim and the program of the academy: it *"shall support the individual works, shall publish the works which now lie in libraries, and shall support publications prepared by societies of scholars"* (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 308).

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower was convinced that the Jabnean Academy is not a Utopia, *"although time will pass until its foundation"*. He was so convinced that the Jabnean Academy would be founded, that he decided to list its functions. Of course, he was not sure, he only tried to propose a number of points for the literary program that would for the Jabnean Academy. In the beginning, he proposed 17 points. Later, in the German edition of his booklet, he proposed 26 points, some of them including paragraphs (Niemirower 1909, 23-30). In the Hebrew edition of his booklet he concentrated them in 22 points only (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 24-29). Finally, in the Romanian version, he mentions 23 points for the literary program (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 308-312). These tasks were:

- Knowledge of the Bible: to prepare a new commentary of the Hebrew Bible, based on Jewish and non-Jewish commentaries;
- Study and dissemination of the apocryphal literature, including Philo's philosophy and historical works of Josephus, insufficiently known by the Jews;

- Research on the national-popular works, in which *Halakhic* works and the *Targum* will be presented to educated Jews who are not *Torah* scholars;
- Translations of the *Midrashic* and *Hagadic* literature, in order to make them the property of all the people;
- Studies about the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud; “*a Jewish Academy should try to systematize the Talmud and to turn its contents into anew form*”; to translate its Syriac and Aramaic parts in Hebrew; to help the Talmud to obtain a place of honor in world literature;
- To publish cheap editions of the works of the Jewish classical poets and philosophers of the Arabic-Spanish period;
- To study the *Responsa* literature, “*very useful for our history and literature*”;
- The study of the “*Pilpul*”;
- The study of all the forms and phases of the *Kabbalah*, from philosophic, theosophic, psychological points of view;
- The study of the *Chassidism*, of its ethics, homiletics and legends from the scientific and historic points of view;
- The search for and publishing of literature dealing the *Chassidic* life; examples in this direction are the Yiddish (Niemirower notes “*jargonist*”) writer Yitzhak Leib Peretz and the Hebrew writer Michah Yosef Berdichevsky;
- To publish modern studies on the Talmud and the *Midrash* and anthologies of Hebrew, Yiddish and various Judaic literature, and also discourses and socio-political writings of Jews;
- To create a “*Midrash of the sermon*”, to publish a anthology of sermons of the great modern rabbis;
- To prepare and publish a new Hebrew dictionary, as a collective work of some scholars like Eliezer Ben Yehudah;
- To make sure that the masterpieces of the Hebrew and Yiddish (“*jargon*”) literature are included and recognized in world literature; to publish them for this reason;
- To found a Jewish theater, “*the Eastern Jewish theater, founded in Romania by Goldfaden, must arise in more noble and more aesthetic forms*”; it must found a theater in Hebrew and a “*Judaic theatre*” in German in Berlin; [we note that Niemirower did not know of the theater of the Oriental Sephardic Jews, although he was rabbi of the Sephardic Community of Bucharest];
- To support the Jewish art; [in the Hebrew version of the booklet, Niemirower speaks about the possibility for Jewish artists to open exhibitions in Palestine near the Great Library, i.e. the National Library];
- To spread the *Jewish Encyclopedia* written in various languages, and to create a Hebrew Encyclopedia;

- To publish a bibliographic annual including summaries of the writings of Jewish authors in the fields of science and general literature, not only of Germany, but of the all Jewry;
- To collect the Jewish melodies from all over the world, (task of the future “*commission of arts*”);
- “*The most important scientific task of a Jabnean Academy is to publish a cultural, political and economic history of the people of Israel, according to the theories and the methods of historical science, which made immense progress from the times of [Heinrich Zwy] Graetz until now and did not find an entire echo in Judaism*” (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 308-312; Niemirower 1913, 28).

Closing his literary program of tasks for the future Jabnean Academy, Niemirower wrote: “*All these works can be accomplished also without the help of an academy, but they show that an academy should have a wide space of activity*” (Niemirower 1919, 312).

In polemics with those people that criticized his project, Niemirower also proposed a cultural program. He justified his idea saying that “*the Jabnean Academy is more than a society of scholars with literary aims; it is also an institution which creates other cultural institutions*” (Niemirower 1919, 313). Concerning the cultural program, Niemirower proposed nine tasks for the future Jabnean Academy:

- “*The Jabnean Academy, where all the religious trends will be represented, would have, perhaps, the possibility to call to life a universal inter-territorial rabbinical union*”;
- “*A high cultural institution would be able to establish a Pan-Judaic Congress... to found a Jewish Parliament... a modern Exilarchate*”;
- “*The Central Academy should found an alliance between the Jewish seminaries. Jewish studies would profit if rabbinical schools of Germany, America, England, Austria-Hungary, France, Italy, Turkey and Holland could be united for scholarly aims, for disseminating the results of the researches of the teachers of these institutions in various languages of the mentioned countries*”;
- “*Outside of the rabbinical seminaries, the high Talmudic schools would be protected*”;
- “*In addition to rabbinical schools, Orthodox or Liberal, institutions for the science of Judaism must be founded, which would not bear the stamp of theology and not have the aim of preparing rabbis and preachers... The educated Jews could also enrich their knowledge at a Jewish university, ... a high free institution of history, literature, philosophy and law of Judaism and not a high Judaic school... Switzerland may be an appropriate place for a university of the science of Judaism... also the demand that the Jewish studies would be represented in the state universities*”;

- “*The Judaic Academy see to the foundation of a Hebrew Academy, with the task of spreading knowledge of our ancient language, mainly in Palestine... also to found Hebrew-language teaching schools*”;
- “*The ideal of the Jabnean Academy should be an assembly of the Jewish writers who write in various languages in the field of our literature*”;
- An attempt to reunite all the Jewish artists in a national gallery;
- To attract all the Israelites of the world to contribute to a cultural fund in order to achieve the literary and cultural program of the academy (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 313-315).

Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower tried to outline practical ways for the achievement of his proposal. It is his “*practical program*”. He was conscious of the difficulty: many people would reject his idea, each for different reasons. “*Only a few people would be enthusiastic about a cultural fund... The people... will see in this cultural enterprise a game of the wealthy, a luxury of the intellectuals and a show of the nouveaux-riches of the spirit. The Orthodox will see in a Jewish Academy a synod of the Religious Reformers and the Progressives will not look with friendship at the Orthodox in the hall of sciences. The Zionists will be afraid of the influence of the non-Zionist rabbis and the Assimilationists will see the academy as centre of a new International or as a centre of National Judaism. The intellectuals will speak about the danger of a spiritual oligarchy*”, believed Niemirower (Niemirower 1919, 315). However, he hoped that wealthy Jews would make donations for this purpose. Also, he hoped that the Neo-Orthodox would enter into the “*enterprise of the academy*” and would try to convince the representatives of the Old Orthodoxy that this is not a religious revolution. He hoped also, that the Zionists and their opponents would collaborate in this field. He was convinced that an agreement between the great Jewish organizations in the cultural field would lead to the creation of the Jabnean Academy. Niemirower defined himself as an optimist, basing his optimism on the general situation of the Jewish people at the turn of century. However, he did not prepare a detailed program for organization of the future Jabnean Academy: before the second step it was necessary to take the first step, the propaganda for a cultural Pan-Judaism (Niemirower 1919-1932, II, 315-318).

Conclusion

As a conclusion, we may note that the proposal of Rabbi Dr. Jacob Isaac Niemirower was courageous and important for that period. It could have revolutionized the cultural history of the Jewish people. However, it was not realist for the first decades of the 20th century. Also Niemirower’s optimism contained a small measure of pessimism: he often needed to respond to skepticism, and understood that the Jewish magnates preferred to make

donations for various philanthropic causes, but not for culture. However, the situation changed after World War I. The Hebrew University was founded in Jerusalem. Cultural life developed in Palestine, and in the American Diaspora. After the foundation of the State of Israel, an Israeli Academy of Sciences was founded, and also an Academy of the Hebrew language, and various cultural associations and institutions. Without adopting Niemirower's proposals, his ideas were achieved in other forms.

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