

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE A CENTURY OF LEADERSHIP

# Program

FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RUSSIAN-AMERICAN JEWISH LAY LEADERSHIP

FROM IMMIGRATION AND RESETTLEMENT TO INTEGRATION AND ENGAGEMENT



*a century of leadership*

MAY 5-7, 2006 WASHINGTON, D.C.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE A CENTURY OF LEADERSHIP

# Program

FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RUSSIAN-AMERICAN JEWISH LAY LEADERSHIP MAY 5-7, 2006

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## Sponsors

This conference is sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and its Richard Maass Fund for the Development of Russian Jewish Leadership, established by Dolly Maass in 2005, in memory of her late husband, a former national president of the American Jewish Committee and the first chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. Additionally, funds for the conference were provided by generous donations from the following individuals: Dr. Igor Branovan, Alex Goldin, Dr. Cheryl Fishbein, Boris Gorbis, Erik Ikhilov, Vadim Muchnik, Phillip Radley, Edward Renko, Dr. Dmitry Shiglik, and Margo Volftsun.

# Welcome

Dear Friend,

The American Jewish Committee welcomes you to its First National Conference of Russian-American Jewish Lay Leadership, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the American Jewish Committee.

The theme of our conference is *From Immigration and Resettlement to Integration and Engagement*. In recognition of the extraordinary activity and energy of Russian-speaking leaders working in their respective communities, this conference has as its goal to promote a national discussion about the best strategies to integrate Russian Jewish immigrant communities into American society and the larger American Jewish community. By bringing together all of you, Russian-speaking Jewish community leaders from across the country, we hope to build and strengthen networks of leaders who will have far-reaching impact in the coming years.

It is significant to note that this conference is being held in conjunction with AJC's 100th anniversary celebration and Annual Meeting. Founded in 1906, in response to the Kishinev pogroms, AJC has been throughout the decades, and remains today, steadfastly dedicated to the well-being of Jewish communities and to building bonds of friendship and understanding between Jews in America and Jews around the world.

We are very glad that you chose to join us for this exciting and important first-of-its-kind event. Your voice and contribution are crucial toward the success, not only of this conference, but to the ongoing work of integration and engagement of our community.

We have put together this booklet to help facilitate networking among all of you. In it you will find contact information for everyone in attendance, as well as biographical information about all the speakers and panelists. We hope this information will be useful to you and will facilitate the creation of a national network among Russian-speaking Jewish lay leaders and activists.

Sincerely,

Marvin Israelow and Leonard Petlakh  
Conference Co-Chairs

## FRIDAY, MAY 5

NOON–3:00 PM Arrival and Registration

12:30–2:30 PM Plenary Luncheon of 100th Annual Meeting

### Charting the Future: Visions of the Next Generation

3:00–4:00 PM Cocktail Reception

Twigs Grill

6:00PM Kabbalat Shabbat and Dinner

10:00 PM **Tusovka** (Hang-out)

## SATURDAY, MAY 6

8:00 AM Breakfast

9:00 AM Shabbat Services and Study with International Leadership Conference

12:30 PM Lunch

Congressional Room

1:15–2:00 PM **Welcoming Remarks**

**E. Robert Goodkind**, AJC President

**Dr. Misha Galperin**, Executive Vice President,  
Jewish Federation of Greater Washington

2:00–3:15 PM **Keynote Address and Discussion**

**David A. Harris**, AJC National Executive Director

3:30–4:30 PM **Sociological Portrait of Russian-American Jews**

**Dr. Sam Kliger**, AJC Director of Russian Jewish Community Affairs:

What are the roots of the political and ideological similarities  
and differences between Russian Jews and the mainstream  
American Jewish community?

Response: **Philip Schatten**, President of Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst,  
Chair of the Board of Jewish Education, New York City

4:45–6:30 PM **Toward One Community**

What is the impact of Russian-American Jews on the American Jewish  
community? What are the benefits and challenges of bringing  
new perspectives and cultural differences to the American Jewish  
community?

#### Panel discussion

Moderator: **Leonard Petlakh**, Vice President, Russian American Jews for Israel

Panelists: **Alena Tsimis** (Chicago)

**Alex Koifman** (Boston)

**Boris Gorbis** (Los Angeles)

8:00 PM **Havdalah and Dinner Party**

with participants in the International Leadership Conference

## SUNDAY, MAY 7

- 8:00–8:30 AM Breakfast Congressional Room
- 8:30–10:00 AM **Jewish Identity for Russian Americans**  
How do Russian Americans connect with their Jewish identity?  
What is the place of religion?  
Where do Israel and Israel advocacy fit?  
What are the best ways of transmitting Jewish knowledge to the current and the next generation?  
**Panel Discussion**  
Moderator: **Dr. Cheryl Fishbein**, Co-Chair, AJC National Committee on Russian Jewish Community Affairs  
Panelists: **Lenny Gusel** (San Francisco)  
**Alex Budnitsky** (New York)  
**Alex Goldin** (New York)
- 10:15–11:45 AM **Political Involvement of Russian American Jews**  
What impact do Russian American Jews have on the local and national levels?  
How can Russian voices be strengthened?  
**Panel Discussion**  
Moderator: **Philippe Radley**, Co-Chair of New York City Advocacy Committee, AJC New York Chapter  
Panelists: **Daniel Barenboym** (Boston)  
**Gary Light** (Chicago)  
**Elie Rubinstein** (New York)  
Remarks: **Sergey Bologov** (Boston)  
**Igor Golubchik** (Chicago)
- 12:00–1:30 PM **Engagement in Jewish Communal Life**  
What is the status of philanthropic involvement, volunteerism, and board membership in American Jewish organizations?  
What does the American Jewish community offer?  
What obstacles to participation currently exist and how can they be overcome?  
**Panel Discussion**  
Moderator: **Marvin Israelow**, AJC Westchester Chapter President  
Panelists: **Gene Rachmansky** (New York)  
**Edward Renko** (Chicago)  
**Margo Volftsun** (Washington)
- 1:30–2:30 PM **Lunch and Closing Remarks**  
Closing remarks: **Dr. Igor Branovan**, Co-Chair, AJC National Committee on Russian Jewish Community Affairs

## Demographic Portrait of Conference Participants

Total number  
of FSU-born lay leaders  
in attendance: 72

Female: 30

Male: 42

American Lay Leaders  
and Guests in Attendance: 15

### City/State of Residence:

Boston: 6 (8%)

Chicago: 10 (14%)

Jerusalem: 1

Los Angeles: 2

Milwaukee: 2

New Jersey: 2

New York: 41 (57%)

San Francisco: 4 (6%)

Toledo: 1

Vancouver: 2

Washington, D.C.: 1

### Age of Participants:

Median age: 46

Youngest: 19

Oldest: 85

Younger than 40: 40 (56%)

Ages 40-55: 20 (28%)

Ages 55+: 12 (17%)

### Country of Origin:

Azerbaijan: 1

Belarus: 4 (6%)

Georgia: 1

Israel: 1

Latvia: 2

Moldova: 5 (7%)

Russia: 30 (42%)

Tajikistan: 1

Ukraine: 20 (28%)

Uzbekistan: 3 (4%)

### Years in America:

Less than 5: 1

5-15 years: 17 (24%)

15-25 years: 30 (42%)

25+ years: 24 (33%)

# Speaker and Panelist Bios

## **Daniel Barenboym** (Boston)

Daniel Barenboym came to America from Moscow in 1990 at the age of 15. He has been an active participant in a number of events organized on behalf of Israel by the Russian-Jewish community. In the past five years Daniel has become an active member of the Russian Jewish movement, working to advance the community's political standing by organizing events and meetings with current and aspiring politicians, by educating the Russian American public on aspects of voting and political participation, and by highlighting the community's social issues by presenting them to the political leadership. Daniel is an active board member of the Boston Chapter of AJC and the League of Russian Voters, a member of RAJI, and coordinator of Boston Supports Israel.

## **Serge Bologov** (Boston)

Serge Bologov came to the U.S. from Kiev in 1992. In 1995 he joined the Russian Community Association of Massachusetts (RCAM) as its executive director. RCAM provides social services, ESL classes, employment, and other assistance to refugees and immigrants from the former Soviet Union; it has three offices in Massachusetts, located in Boston, Lynn, and Springfield. RCAM produces an electronic Russian community newsletter and a Russian-language TV program called "Aspect." In 2004, Serge graduated from AJC's Leadership Training Program in Boston. Serge serves as a board member of several organizations including the Governor's Advisory Council on Refugees and Immigrants; Jewish Community Relations Council; Russian Jewish Community Foundation; Massachusetts Association of Russian Jews "Chaverim"; chair of the Joint Action Committee for Russian Jewish Community; and president of the League of Russian Voters and Coalition of New American Voters.

## **Dr. Daniel Igor Branovan** (New Jersey)

Daniel Igor Branovan, M.D., was born in 1967 to a family of professionals in Kaliningrad, USSR. In 1980, the family immigrated to the United States and settled in Philadelphia. Several years later, Igor graduated from the Beth Jacob Yeshiva and enrolled in Haverford College. His choice of a career in medicine led him to the Stanford University School of Medicine, and then to the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, where he completed his training as an ear, nose, and throat surgeon. Dr. Branovan currently holds titles of residency training director and director of the thyroid center at the hospital. Dr. Branovan has been involved actively in the affairs of the Russian American Jewish community in New York and nationally. He is a graduate of the AJC Leadership Training Program. Since 2005, Dr. Branovan has served on AJC's Board of Governors, the first-ever Soviet Jewish immigrant on the board. Igor is co-chair of the AJC National Committee on Russian Jewish Community Affairs. He currently serves as president of Russian American Jews for Israel (RAJI).

**Alex Budnitsky** (New York)

Since arriving in the United States from Kiev, Ukraine, Alex Budnitsky has been working in the Jewish communal field for twelve years and currently serves as the assistant executive director of the Edith and Carl Marks Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst. He also consults on various Jewish community development projects for the Joint Distribution Committee in Russia and Ukraine. Alex holds a Master's degree in journalism and social work from Columbia University. He is also a graduate of the Institute of Not-for-Profit Management, a program directed by UJA-Federation and Columbia University School of Business. Alex Budnitsky is a member of the Board of the New York Chapter of the AJC and a founding member of RAJI.

**Dr. Cheryl Fishbein** (New York)

Dr. Cheryl Fishbein is a clinical psychologist and an attorney. She is on the Board of Governors of the American Jewish Committee and is co-chair of the AJC National Committee on Russian Jewish Community Affairs. Cheryl is a board member of the JCH of Bensonhurst, where she is also a past president and past chair. Cheryl is also active within UJA-Federation of New York, where she is a board member, past Executive Committee member, chair of the Hurricane Relief Fund, on the Caring Commission Cabinet, and a member of the Task Force on Russian-Speaking Jews.

**Dr. Misha Galperin** (Washington, D.C.)

Dr. Misha Galperin is the executive vice president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, representing one of North America's largest Jewish communities. Prior to joining the Federation in June 2001, Misha served as the chief operating officer of UJA-Federation of New York. Galperin was known there for his innovative approach to organizational development and for building many new programmatic and fundraising initiatives. Born in Odessa in 1958, Misha emigrated to the United States in 1976. His resettlement was facilitated by Federation agencies much like the ones where he went on to build his career: the Educational Alliance (the nation's oldest Jewish settlement house), the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA), the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, FEGS, and several Jewish community centers in Los Angeles and New York. Galperin holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from New York University. He is also a graduate of the Wexner Heritage Foundation's Jewish literacy program for lay leadership. Galperin has spoken and written widely on issues of psychological processes, Jewish life, community building, and philanthropy.

**Alexander Goldin** (New York)

Alexander Goldin was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1971. He arrived in the U.S. in 1977 and attended the Yeshiva of Flatbush from 1977 to 1989. Alex graduated cum laude from NYU in 1993 with a degree in political science and from New York Law School in 1996 with a Juris Doctor degree. He is a member of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association and New York County Lawyers Association, and is a licensed New York State real estate broker. Alex is on the Board of Directors of the New York Chapter of the American Jewish Commit-

tee. He has served as a UJA-Federation Young Leadership/Russian Division board member from 1998 to the present and is currently a member of the Leadership Cabinet. Alex also serves on the boards of the UJA-Federation of New York, Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, Russian American Jews for Israel, and the American Forum of the World Congress of Russian Jewry. He is married to Ella, and they have two sons, Allen and David. He is fluent in English, Russian, and Hebrew.

**E. Robert Goodkind** (New York)

E. Robert Goodkind is the president of the American Jewish Committee and a partner in the New York law firm of Pryor Cashman Sherman & Flynn LLP. He was chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Museum (1994-97) and of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts (1981-88), the oldest dramatic training school in the English-speaking world. Mr. Goodkind was chairman of the American Jewish Committee's Board of Governors (2001-04), National Council (1997-2000), and Board of Trustees (1991-94), National Emeritus of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (formerly the Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers of the Anti-Defamation League), having served as its founding chairman from 1988-1992. He serves on the Board of AJC's Koppelman Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations and the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights. In 1991 he was the recipient of AJC's National Distinguished Leadership Award. He is a vice president and executive committee member of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture. Mr. Goodkind is a graduate of Princeton University (1954) and Harvard Law School (1959). He was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree by Hebrew College (June 2005).

**Boris Gorbis** (Los Angeles)

Boris Gorbis came to the United States from Odessa (Ukraine) on his twenty-fifth birthday with a degree in psycholinguistics and directions from David Harris on how to get from San Francisco to Big Sur. While lecturing at Stanford and working on his JD degree from the UC Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law, he became an active member of the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews. He was a two-term president of the Boalt Hall International Law Society, organizing seminars on international status of refugees and stateless persons. After admission to the California Bar in 1980, Mr. Gorbis moved to Los Angeles and became an active participant in the work of Federation and local agencies. He served several terms on the Board of Directors of the Federation, chaired the Board of the West Side Jewish Community Center, and for years was a member of the Executive Board of the Jewish Community Relations Council. He has been a member of the Board of Southern California Council for Soviet Jewry since 1982.

As one of the catalysts in the life of the Los Angeles Russian-speaking community, Mr. Gorbis was a founder of AJSE (Association of Soviet Jewish Immigrants). His report on a fact-finding mission to Europe dealing with the refugee crisis of 1998 facilitated a much-needed shift in State Department policy. He was a co-chair of "Operation Exodus," raising funds for stranded refugees. He also organized and took part in several conferences on refugee acculturation and resettlement and, as a member of the Board of Directors of Wilstein Institute for Jewish Policy Studies at the University of Judaism, contributed to the formula-

tion of major policy documents on these issues. He has authored numerous publications on subjects including law, trade, Jewish rights, semantics, artificial intelligence, and cognition. His latest book, *The Book of Chance Meetings*, is to be published in 2007.

**Lenny Gusel** (San Francisco)

Lenny Gusel emigrated with his family from Moscow to New York City in 1981 at the age of 9. Over the last four years Lenny has become deeply involved in the Russian-speaking Jewish community, focusing his efforts on bringing together young adult Russian-speaking Jews and integrating them into Jewish life. He is the cofounder of the “79ers” community in San Francisco, a highly successful outreach and identity development program that brings together Russian-Jewish young adults who emigrated from the former Soviet Union at a young age. Based on his work with the 79ers, Lenny has recently founded the RJeneration community in New York City. Lenny is an active member of AJC’s ACCESS program for young adults in San Francisco and now in New York.

**David Harris** (New York)

David A. Harris has been executive director of AJC since 1990. In the course of his extensive career in Jewish communal work, he has traveled around the world to monitor the condition of Jewish communities, combat anti-Semitism, advance Israel’s diplomatic standing, and promote international human rights and interreligious and interethnic understanding. Harris was centrally involved in the emigration of more than one million Jews from the Soviet Union and was described by the *Washington Post* as “one of the leading spokesmen” for the Soviet Jewry movement. In the course of this work, he was twice detained by Soviet authorities and expelled from the country. He was asked by the Jewish community to serve as the national coordinator for the historic Freedom Sunday for Soviet Jewry, the 1987 demonstration in Washington that drew more than 250,000 participants, the largest Jewish gathering in U.S. history. In 2003, Harris received the first Lifetime Achievement Award from the Russian Jewish community in the U.S. for “his lifelong dedication to the physical and spiritual return of Soviet Jews to the Jewish people.”

David Harris has been described as one of the foremost American advocates for Israel’s political and diplomatic standing, meeting frequently with world leaders to discuss issues affecting the Middle East. He has testified before the U.S. Congress on several occasions regarding the Middle East, NATO expansion, Russian and Soviet affairs, and anti-Semitism. Harris earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania and pursued his graduate studies in international relations at the London School of Economics. He then spent a year as a junior associate at Oxford University. From 2000-02, he was a visiting scholar at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. In 2003, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Hebrew Union College. In 2005, Harris was presented by the French minister of foreign affairs with its highest honor, the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Harris has published seven books, including: *The Jewish World, Entering a New Culture*, and four volumes of *In the Trenches*. His new book, in Russian, *I Am My Brother’s Keeper*, was published in 2006. A previous volume in Russian, *Hopes and Challenges at the Beginning of the Century*, was published in 2004. He is also the co-author of *The Jokes of*

*Oppression*. He has written scores of articles, op-eds, letters, and reviews published in leading newspapers and magazines, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *USA Today* and the *International Herald Tribune*. He has a biweekly radio commentary on CBS Radio, which is heard across the U.S.

**Marvin Israelow** (New York)

Marvin Israelow has worked as an organizational development consultant for the past twenty-nine years. He provides clients with a broad range of services including strategic planning, team development, leadership counseling, and customized seminars in change management and career development. Prior to starting his own firm in 1983, Mr. Israelow worked for the Exxon Corporation as an organizational development advisor. His academic background includes a B.S. in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School, and a Thouron Fellowship at the London School of Economics. He earned a Master's degree from Temple University and studied at MIT's Sloan School of Management, where he also taught and conducted research on the innovation process in organizations. His community leadership positions include vice president of the Educational Alliance of New York City, member of the Board of Governors and president of the Westchester Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, cabinet member of UJA-Federation NY Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal, and other organizations. Marvin is the co-chair of the AJC First Conference of Russian-American Jewish Lay Leadership.

**Dr. Sam Kliger** (New York)

Dr. Sam Kliger is AJC's director of Russian Jewish Community Affairs in New York. His responsibilities include creating, developing, and implementing a variety of programs with the goal of successfully integrating Russian Jews into the American Jewish community and general American society. He also serves as a liaison between AJC and Russian Jewish communities and organizations around the world. Among other things, Kliger is responsible for preparing a new generation of leaders from the Russian Jewish community. Sam emigrated to the U.S. from Moscow in 1990 after being a "refusenik" for many years. He is the founder and chairman of the Research Institute for New Americans (RINA), a think tank and research organization for the Russian-speaking community in the U.S. He served as the principal investigator in a number of surveys about the Russian Jewish community, including several major AJC-sponsored studies. Kliger received his doctorate in sociology from the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow. He has published a number of works on Russian immigrants in the U.S.

**Alex Koifman** (Boston)

Alex Koifman left the former Soviet Union as a teenager in 1978. He graduated with a computer science degree from Brandeis University. Alex is the father of two children, David and Rebecca, and works as a software engineer. He is a founding member of the grassroots Boston for Israel organization and a Board member of the American Jewish Committee, Boston Chapter. He has organized a number of pro-Israel events, including Boston for Israel '04. Alex has made numerous trips to Israel and served in SAREL-Volunteers for IDF.

**Gary Light** (Chicago)

Gary Light is the principal owner of the Law Office of Gary Light, PC, a Chicago-based international law firm. He graduated with honors from Northwestern University in 1989, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree. After working for several years as a consultant with one of the leading firms in downtown Chicago, Gary Light entered Chicago-Kent College of Law, from which he graduated in a 1995 with a degree of Juris Doctor and Certificate in International and Comparative Law. In 2002, he established the Law Office of Gary Light, PC. He is fluent in Russian and Ukrainian and has represented a number of Western companies and private investors in the former Soviet Union, as well as Russian and Ukrainian companies in their activities in the United States. Gary Light was a founding member of the 2005 AJC Chicago Leadership Program. He serves on the Board of Directors of HIAS Chicago, Hillels of Illinois, and American Forum of the World Congress of Russian Jewry.

**Leonard Petlakh** (New York)

Born in Minsk, USSR, Leonard Petlakh immigrated to the U.S. with his family via Vienna and Rome in his teens. Leonard holds a B.A. in Jewish studies and an M.B.A. in management. He worked in Hillel and served as Hillel director at Baruch College and Pace University. He has been serving as the associate executive director of the Hebrew Free Loan Society since 1999. Leonard is a cofounder and vice president of Russian American Jews for Israel (RAJI), a national Israel advocacy group working with the Russian American Jewish community. He has been associated with the American Jewish Committee since winning the AJC national college essay contest in 1994, excerpts of which were published in the *New York Times*. In 2005, Leonard received the prestigious National Young Professional Award from the Jewish Communal Service Association of North America. Leonard is the cochair of AJC's First Conference of Russian-American Jewish Lay Leadership.

**Gene Rachmansky** (New York)

Gene Rachmansky began his communal involvement as a summer legal intern at NYANA in 1995, where he worked primarily on political asylum applications for refugees. In 1997 he began his involvement at UJA-Federation of New York, starting as a volunteer in the Young Leadership of the Russian Division and moving on to chair that division for five of the last nine years. He has actively participated in the UJA-NY Public Affairs Division, meeting with national and local political leaders. Recently, he chaired the Cross-Divisional Task Force on Russian-Speaking Jewry. Gene is a cabinet member of the Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal at UJA-NY, as well as a member of the Board of Directors and nominating committee. Gene has a degree in International Politics from New York University and a J.D. from the Fordham University School of Law. Currently he is a partner and principal of BDS Advisors, a global macro money manager specializing in financial and commodity derivatives. He was born in Israel and lived in Canada before arriving in the United States at the age of seven. He grew up in Sheepshead Bay and Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, New York, and currently lives in Manhattan with his wife and two children.

**Philippe D. Radley** (New York)

Philippe Radley has been an attorney in private practice since 1980. He is now with Rand Rosenzweig Radley & Gordon LLP, specializing in corporate law, intellectual property, and immigration law. Before his law career, Philippe was a professor of Russian language and literature at Amherst College (1962-68), SUNY at Stony Brook (1969-79), and a teaching fellow at Harvard University (1959-62). Philippe received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in Slavic Languages and Literatures. His translation of *The Italics are Mine* (Harcourt Brace, 1969) received a National Book Award nomination in 1969. Phillippe has been on the American Jewish Committee New York Chapter Board for the past decade and has been the chair and cochair of the City Advocacy Task Force. He was president of Temple Emanuel Men's Club, 1999-2001, and is presently a board member.

**Edward Renko** (Chicago)

Edward Renko was born in Odessa, Ukraine, and immigrated with his family to the United States in 1977. Edward graduated from the University of Illinois, where he majored in industrial engineering and management of information systems. In 1992, Edward started his own consulting and technology firm (CSA, Inc.). After successfully running the business for six years, he sold CSA to a public company. Today, Edward is the CEO of EAG Capital Holdings, a real estate development company located in Northbrook, Illinois. Edward is the president of the American Forum of the World Congress of Russian Jewry, an organization dedicated to the advancement of Jewish life and Jewish rights of Russian-speaking Jews living on the American continent, including the integration of Russian-speaking Jews in mainstream Jewish communities, and to the support of the State of Israel.

**Elie Rubinstein** (New York)

A native of Belarus, Elie Rubinstein is a graduate of Byelorussian Polytechnic Institute and received his Master's degree in Jewish Communal Service and Management from Brandeis University. Elie has worked in the Jewish communal service field almost all his professional life. Starting as a lay leader in Belarus, Elie was hired in 1991 as regional director for the International Association for Jewish Studies and Jewish Culture. He immigrated to the United States in 1993. Since that time Elie has worked as an outreach coordinator at the Hillel Jewish Student Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, and then at Hebrew Union College. Since 2003, Elie has served as the marketing and development director of the Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring, a national Jewish fraternal organization. Elie graduated from AJC's Leadership Training Program in 2005.

**Alena Tsimis** (Chicago)

In 1990, Alena Tsimis moved with her family to the United States from Odessa, Ukraine. In Chicago, she attended DePaul University and received a degree in marketing and management. She quickly jumped into the marketing industry, working first at the Millward Brown firm. She founded I Imagine Studio in the Northwestern University Center for Innovation in Evanston, Illinois. She became active with the American Jewish Committee in March of 2005

when she joined the AJC Chicago Leadership Training Program. Alena dedicates her talent and expertise as a marketing professional to help Israeli businesses grow using effective marketing communications. Clients in Israel include companies in healthcare, law, and product manufacturing. Alena is passionate about strengthening the position of Israeli businesses to promote the well-being of the Jewish people worldwide.

**Margo Volftsun** (Washington, D.C.)

Margo Volftsun is a full-time volunteer in the Jewish communal world. Margo immigrated to the United States from Kiev, Ukraine, in 1977 as a teenager. After graduating from Ohio State University with a degree in computer science, Margo pursued a successful career in the telecommunications industry. Retiring in 1999, Margo immersed herself in her second career—fighting for the survival and success of the Jewish people. In 2002, she cofounded the Jewish Youth Philanthropy Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based organization educating Jewish teens about organized philanthropy and civic engagement. Ms. Volftsun is also one of the founders and a board member of the Israel Project, an organization working to strengthen Israel’s public image. Margo serves on the board of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, where she cochairs the Moscow Connections Committee, overseeing a partnership initiative between the Jewish communities of Washington and Moscow. She is also a board member of the Shalom Education Center (a Jewish educational institution aimed at the Soviet émigré community in Washington, D.C.) and NCSJ (which advocates on behalf of Jews of Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States, and Eurasia). Ms. Volftsun is a graduate of Leadership Fairfax, the heritage program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, and the Wexner Heritage Foundation’s Jewish literacy program for lay leadership.

**AJC Russian Leadership Conference Planning Committee:**

Marvin Israelow, Co-chair

Leonard Petlakh, Co-chair

Ben Akselrod

Igor Branovan

Alex Budnitsky

Cheryl Fishbein

Alex Goldin

Lenny Gusel

Sam Kliger

Philippe Radley

Elie Rubinstein

## AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE A CENTURY OF LEADERSHIP

AS THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY IN 2006, WE REFLECT UPON 100 YEARS OF ACTIVISM, OPTIMISM, LEADERSHIP AND ACHIEVEMENT. WHETHER SAFEGUARDING MINORITIES; FIGHTING TERRORISM, ANTI-SEMITISM, HATRED AND BIGOTRY; PURSUING SOCIAL JUSTICE; ADVANCING HUMAN DIGNITY; SUPPORTING ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST IN PEACE AND SECURITY; DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OR PROVIDING HUMANITARIAN RELIEF TO THOSE IN NEED, AJC CONTINUES TO BE A BEACON OF HOPE ON THE AMERICAN AND WORLD LANDSCAPE. THROUGH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS, EDUCATION, RESEARCH, MEDIA OUTREACH AND EXTENSIVE DIPLOMATIC ADVOCACY, AJC WORKS TO ADVANCE FREEDOM, LIBERTY, TOLERANCE AND MUTUAL RESPECT. AT THIS SINGULAR MOMENT IN AJC HISTORY, WE REDEDICATE OUR EFFORTS TO CHAMPION THESE CHERISHED VALUES IN THE HOPE OF BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR US ALL.

