

Online Session of the International Forum of Young Scholars on East European Jewry

July 5 – 6, 2021

Short bio and research descriptions of the participants



Paula Ansaldo

E-mail: paulansaldo@hotmail.com

Paula Ansaldo holds a Ph.D. in History and Theory of Arts from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). Her doctoral thesis explored the history of Jewish theatre in Buenos Aires and its contributions to the Argentine theatre scene. She is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Institute of Performing Arts-UBA and a member of the Centre of Jewish Studies at the Institute of Economic and Social Research. She teaches History of Theatre in the Department of Arts at the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature-UBA. She has co-published the book *Independent Theatre: History and Present* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del CCC, 2017) and numerous articles in peer-reviewed academic publications in the U.S., Spain, Brazil, France, Mexico, Chile, Peru, Poland, and Argentina. Her work has been supported by grants from the National Council for Technical and Scientific Research of Argentina (CONICET), Fordham University-New York Public Library, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, American Philosophical Society, University of Sussex, and Latin American Jewish Studies Association.

Research abstract: During the interwar period, a large population of Yiddish-speaking Jews settled in South America escaping difficult living conditions and anti-Semitism in Europe. As a result, a rich Yiddish cultural life began to grow and the major cities of the region –like Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago de Chile, and Montevideo– became an attractive destination for Yiddish intellectuals and artists. For these Jewish immigrants, Yiddish theatre functioned as a meeting place where they could share their mother tongue and deal with the feeling of longing for the “*alter heym*”, the old home. At the same time, by the 30s, Yiddish theatre audiences in Eastern Europe and the U.S. were declining, so actors increasingly toured to countries where theatre in Yiddish thrived, as was the case in South American cities. The

multidirectional migratory movement of European Jews during the interwar period and the use of the international language of Yiddish contributed to creating an extensive transnational network of Yiddish artists, which helped them perform throughout the world. The southern hemisphere had an extra advantage: it benefited from the season's opposition, so the actors could work the winter season in South America during their summer break in their home countries. Therefore, since the beginning of the Yiddish theatre circuit in South America, the arrival of guest artists from the U.S. and Europe became a fundamental component of the season. The city of Buenos Aires became the theatre capital of the region. Argentine impresarios brought guest artists from abroad to lead their companies and filled out the cast with local actors, organizing what became known as a “star system”. Once in Buenos Aires, the guest stars also traveled to other Latin American cities with large Yiddish-speaking communities. A typical tour of a Yiddish actor of the time would include performing in Buenos Aires and then moving on to Montevideo and the Brazilian cities of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and sometimes Porto Alegre or Recife. It might also include a tour to the Argentine provinces and a trip across the Andes to perform in Santiago de Chile. My research aims to explore how this Yiddish theatre circuit functioned, and the role that Yiddish theatre had on the development of Jewish cultural life in South America. By doing this, my investigation will intend to contribute to the recognition of South American Yiddish theatre as a significant phenomenon within the transnational Yiddish cultural system.



Mariann Farkas

E-mail: mariann.farkas.hu@gmail.com

Mariann Farkas earned her Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from Eötvös Loránd University (2014) with a specialization in History of Art and received her Master's degree in History of Art from University of Milan (2017). She is currently a doctoral candidate at the Department of Jewish Art at Bar-Ilan University. Her research interests include East Central European Jewish art, Hungarian-Israeli cultural history and identity studies.

Prior to commencing her PhD she was a coordinator at Friends of the Museum of Fine Arts–Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest (2018). Her earlier internships at

Gallery8 at the European Roma Cultural Foundation in Budapest (2013–2014) and at the Department of Photography at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (2017) provided good understanding of the art sphere. Besides that she volunteered at Museum of Fine Arts (2010–2014) and at Haver Jewish Educational Public Benefit Foundation in Budapest (2013–2014).

Her study and research have been supported by the Erasmus Programme, by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Cooperation's Scholarship and by the President's Scholarship of Bar-Ilan University.



Samuel Finkelman

E-mail: sfink@sas.upenn.edu

Samuel Finkelman is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Pennsylvania, specializing in Jewish history in the post-Stalin Soviet Union. His current dissertation project reassesses the Jewish national movement by centering the movement's interactions and exchanges with the Ukrainian and Russian national movements, charting these various national movement's mutual, if clashing, efforts to construct national collective memories of catastrophe. The project's main primary source base is the self-published literature, or *samizdat*, these activists and intellectuals produced and disseminated to galvanize national consciousness throughout the 1960s-1980s. Exploring the common ideas and dilemmas, the interactions and exchanges, that linked the Jewish, Russian, and Ukrainian national movements, this project shows why forces traditionally thought of as hostile to Jewish interests nonetheless significantly influenced Soviet Jews in their formulation of a politics rooted in national redemption. Ideally, this reassessment will stimulate further research into how inter-ethnic exchange invigorated and shaped the form and content of national grassroots politics throughout the post-Stalin Soviet Union.

After completing his BA in Russian literature at Middlebury College in Vermont, Sam spent a year at Siberian Federal University in Krasnoyarsk, Russia on a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Award. He then received his MA in Russian Studies from the University of Amsterdam, where he wrote his thesis on the Jewish-

Soviet dissident and historian Mikhail Agurskii. After working for a year in Washington D.C. at the Eurasia Foundation, helping bring together Americans and Russians for joint civil society initiatives, Sam began his doctoral program in history at the University of Pennsylvania in 2017. During the start of the program, he researched trials against former Jewish functionaries in Nazi concentration camps and ghettos prosecuted for crimes of collaboration in postwar Soviet Lithuania and presented his research twice at Yad Vashem. A recent recipient of the ASEEES Cohen-Tucker Dissertation Research Fellowship, Samuel is excited to return soon to the archives in Moscow and Kyiv.

Sam is fluent in Russian, proficient in Ukrainian and Hebrew, and started learning Yiddish during the pandemic. In addition to language learning, his passions include playing guitar, chess, hiking, and traveling.



Samuel Glauber-Zimra

E-mail: glauber@post.bgu.ac.il

Samuel Glauber-Zimra is a PhD Candidate in the Goldstein-Goren Department of Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. His research, presently focused on East European Jewry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is situated at the intersection of Modern Jewish cultural and intellectual history, media studies, and religious studies. His dissertation, “Occultism and the East European Jewish Cultural Sphere, 1900–1939,” presents a cultural and intellectual history of the encounter between East European Jewry and the many occult currents that gained global popularity in the early twentieth century. Drawing on Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish, Russian, and German press sources, as well as literary works, religious literature, memoirs, and archival materials, the study demonstrates the significance of modern occultism for a number of key issues in East European Jewish modernity. These include questions of self-formation, mentalities surrounding disenchantment and the natural world, traditional religious beliefs, and the emergence of heterodox modes of post-traditional religiosity. During the early twentieth century, Eastern European Jews, both the working poor and the bourgeois, debated the merits of telepathy, took part in spiritualist séances, experienced wonderment at mind-reading

shows, called on the services of psychic mediums, and sought in occultism a solution to many of the uncertainties of modern life. These activities often featured an orientalist veneer; many East European Jewish occultists styled themselves as Arab or Indian, even as they continued to address the Jewish public in Yiddish. The sway of the occult extended to matters of religion, as well. Jewish occult practitioners presented themselves as experts in both Kabbalah and contemporary occult sciences, blending traditional Jewish esotericism with the latest European fashions. Moreover, a number of traditional Jewish thinkers in Eastern Europe were closely attuned to contemporary cultural trends and drew on popular occult notions to formulate novel conceptions of the soul and afterlife, while ostensibly secular writers engaged extensively with occultism as an expression of post-traditional religiosity that straddled the divide between secularism and traditional religious belief.

Beyond the immediate subject matter of his dissertation, Sam is interested in the role of modern print media in the diffusion of knowledge and cultural trends, the mirroring of popular culture in religious thought, and the religious landscape of early-twentieth-century East European Jewry.



Rachelle Grossman

E-mail: rgrossman@g.harvard.edu

Rachelle is a doctoral candidate at Harvard University in the department of Comparative Literature. Her research is concerned with the transformation of Yiddish literature in the postwar era, with a particular focus on the activities of Yiddish presses in Latin America and in Poland. She is interested in how a materialist approach to literary studies sheds light on the complex, transnational networks sketched by the Yiddish book. In 2020/21 Rachelle will be a fellow at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York. Previously, she was an affiliated researcher at the Jewish Historical Institute (ŻIH) in and the POLIN Museum in Warsaw. Rachelle holds a Master's in Jewish Education and a Bachelor's in Modern Jewish Studies from the Jewish Theological Seminary as well as a Bachelor's in Comparative Literature from Columbia University.

Research:

Rachelle's research is concerned with Yiddish literary production after the Holocaust. She argues that in the absence of former European centers the formerly peripheral hub of Buenos Aires rose to prominence, becoming a major player in global Yiddish publishing in the postwar era, a center from which hundreds of books were published both for local readers and those abroad. By contrast, within the Yiddish global imaginary, Warsaw—a former literary and cultural capital of Yiddishland—was transformed into a peripheral vestige. In spite of the reduction in its activities relative to its prewar status as a global Yiddish capital, Warsaw continued to be a prolific Yiddish publishing center for over twenty years. In the newly formed People's Republic of Poland, Yiddish publishing activities headed in Warsaw took on a markedly communist tone directed mainly towards a local Polish-Jewish readership.



Sylvia Hershcovitz

E-mail: shershcovitz@gmail.com

Sylvia Hershcovitz is a PhD candidate in the Department of Jewish History at Bar Ilan University in Israel. Her work is still in process, and is coordinated by Prof. Moshe Rosman from Bar Ilan University. She is a Spiegel Fellow in The Arnold and Leona Finkler Institute for Holocaust Research and coordinating the Romanian Forum within the institute.

Her research is about the missing link: **The Jewish Women and their Organizations in Romania during the First Part of the 20th Century**. The dissertation focuses on the quotidian lives of these women and their organizations, their identity, activities and their unique contribution to the women and children's lives during this period of time in Romania.

Even though women are a dominant element in society, they have been consistently excluded from public endeavor and the ruling hegemony. Males occupied the center of the historical hegemonic discourse in the West, whereas women were “appendages” on society's fringes. Consequently, the lives of women as subjects in society, their specific hardships, and their social contribution were hardly researched until the middle of the

twentieth century. The principal concern of this study is the social, gender, and cultural history of Jewish women in Romania—a “minority” not thoroughly researched to this day – in reference to the activity and contribution of these women and their organizations in the first half of the twentieth century.

At the center of the discussion will stand these women’s daily lives, identity, activity; their specific contribution to society and nation-building; and the gender and political challenges that they faced. This research concentrates on the way these entities organized and went about their activity, as philanthropic, social, Zionist or rescue organizations. The study will also analyze the unique contribution of women who headed rescue enterprises during the Holocaust, thus helping to create a feminine model of survival under the war-induced conditions of distress. The contribution and activity of Wizo Romania and the Jewish Center for the Protection of Mother and Child headed by Mela Iancu, will be emphasized.

By “speaking out” and presenting the point of view of a “minority” that has not been admitted to the history books thus far, the research will complement the historiographic discourse about Romanian Jewry in the first half of the twentieth century. By doing so, it will add a historical, social, and gender layer. It is not one history but different histories, multiple sources and angles, unique points of view, and extensive discussion of the issue of gender that will rebuild and reconstruct the narrative of Romanian Jewry in the first half of the twentieth century—a narrative that will also include “her-story.”



Avraham Oriah Kelman

E-mail: aokelman@gmail.com

I have recently finished my M.A. in Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. My M.A. thesis focused on the intellectual history of Polish Jewry in early modernity. More specifically, I scrutinized how the rabbis in Poland in the late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century interpreted and remolded medieval Sephardic philosophical and mystical knowledge. I have argued that the lack of presence of Sephardic scholars in early modern Poland, combined with the consequences of the printing press revolution

and the arrival of Sephardic printed books into Poland, allowed the Polish Rabbis to develop autodidactic and flexible hermeneutics.

My last research, recently submitted to an academic journal, dealt with an early modern Ashkenazi image of the Land of Israel, which accompanied sometimes a praxis of pilgrimage and immigration (Aliyah) as well. According to this image, the Land of Israel is not described as a homey motherland. Rather, it is described as a holy space, designated to facilitate an ascetic way of life for people who wish to expiate their sins and purify and spiritualize their bodies, a fertile ground to the realization of the notion of atonement and abstinence.

In September I will start my Ph.D. in the Religious Studies Department at Stanford University, under the supervision of Prof. Ariel Evan Mayse. I intend to write my Ph.D. dissertation on Ashkenazi Kabbalah in early modernity, taking into account writers in Poland, Bohemia and Germany, especially before the Sabbatian movement (1666). I am interested in describing the various shapes that kabbalistic knowledge took on this area and era and contextualizing it in the early modern Ashkenaz's social and cultural framework and in correlation to the intellectual developments in the contemporary Christian theologies.



Lana Kupiec

E-mail: лана.kupiec@unicaen.fr

I am currently preparing a PhD at the University of Caen Normandy and at Paris Sorbonne University on the subject *Remembering Jewish towns in literature in Russian from 1917 to the 1990s*, under the supervision of Pr. Boris Czerny and Pr. Luba Jurgenson. I studied Literature and Languages at the École normale supérieure (Ens) of Paris and at the Russian department of Sorbonne University (then Paris IV) where I earned a Master's Degree in Russian Literature.

Research abstract

My research project focuses on the study of the depiction of the pre-revolutionary Jewish town of Eastern Europe in literature written in Russian from 1917 to the

beginning of the 1990s, which means, not only in Soviet literature, but also literature in Russian in emigration.

First of all, when studying the Jewish town, one has to keep in mind that it is not only a geographical and cultural phenomenon, but also a construct, an imaginary Jewish space rooted in Yiddish literature, shaped in the 19th century and passed on to the minds of its inhabitants and then to their descendants in emigration, carving what we may call a “collective consciousness” of these towns and of Jewish identity in general. This aspect of the Jewish town as an imaginary construct makes it interesting to study how it is depicted in literature, and in literature in a non Yiddish language, namely Russian.

One horizon or frame of my study is to see how these depictions in literature enter in dialog with other narratives about the Jewish town: scientific narratives (historical and ethnographic studies), fictional narratives in other languages than Russian, “ego-documents”, etc. ?

Since all the depictions in my body of texts are retrospective, the Jewish town becomes a place of origins, and also a lost space of origins, even more so after World War II . One of the questions is : How is a memory of these places constructed through literature?

One of my points of focus is to see how the depiction evolves in time and how it varies depending on the personal paths and ideological points of view of the authors?

How do the great events – mainly the Russian Revolution and World War II, with the destruction of these places, create ruptures in the representation of these towns ? Yet we can wonder whether there are some continuities with the traditional depiction of the Jewish town in Yiddish literature. Indeed, even before the Russian Revolution, which modernized the shtetl, before World War II, these towns were affected by the changes of the 19th century (modernization, industrialization, urbanization) and the sense of decay, of a world that was ending was palpable even before the physical destruction of these places.

How do the depictions vary depending on the ideological points of view or the personal paths of the authors : communist, sionist, or traditionalist ? An author who stayed in

Soviet Russia may not have the same depiction than a sionist writer, but sometimes, the relationship to the town of origins is more intricate.



Dorota Kurek

E-mail: dorota.kurek@phd.usz.edu.pl

Dorota Kurek is a PhD student at the University of Szczecin, Poland. She received her Master degree in history at University of Stettin in 2016, while participation in a number of national and international historical conferences. During the years 2017 – 2019 she worked at the National Museum in Szczecin\ Dialogue Centre “Upheavals”. She is employed as an archivist in Archive of Maritime University of Szczecin. During February/March 2020 she conducted a research in Russian State Military Archive in Moscow carried out under the fellowship of German Historical Institute in Moscow as a part of her research on history of Jewish inhabitants of Stettin.

Research abstract: The Jewish community in German Stettin in the years 1871 – 1940:

The subject of my research is the history of the Jewish community of the city of Szczecin (in German: Stettin) in the years 1871 – 1940. In this time Stettin, as a part of Germany, became an important regional centre of industry and trade, with its large harbor at the mouth of the Oder River. As elsewhere in other German cities Jewish inhabitants of the city had an important share in its economic life. The Jewish community in 19th century Stettin consisted entirely of recent newcomers, mainly from the Eastern European Jewish population living on the territory of former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The growing city attracted people of enterprise, who often quickly gave up their ethnic (but not religious) identity, trying to blend in with German society as “German citizens of Jewish faith”. In my research I focus not only on descent and migrations of Stettin Jews, but also especially on the problem of their national and cultural assimilation, which was always incomplete, but however in many ways advanced process, that as known finally failed. One of the crucial moments for the assimilation was the First World War, and patriotic attitude of Jews in Stettin is a very important evidence of their attachment to Germany as homeland. Other aspects of this problem are the anti-Zionist activity of local rabbi Heinemann Vogelstein (1841 – 1911) and his popularity among Jews or community's attitude towards unassimilated Eastern Jews (“Ostjuden”). Important for research on assimilation are

however also the questions about professional structure of the community or activity of Jewish cultural, eleemosynary, and political associations. The description of these aspects adds up to a detailed image of Jewish life in the city, including demographic, cultural and ideological issues, what should be the result of my research.



Katarzyna Martinovic

E-mail: kasia.martinovic@gmail.com

Katarzyna Martinovic is a PhD candidate at the University of Heidelberg - Hochschule für Jüdische Studien. Her dissertation focuses on the identity, culture, and literature of the Zionist-oriented Jewish youth in interwar Poland.

She holds an MA in Jewish Museology from University of Heidelberg (2017), an MA in Polish Studies (Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in Humanities) at the University of Wrocław (2015) and a BA in Modern Languages (German and Hebrew) from University College London. She has also studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Vienna.

She has been awarded several scholarships, among others PhD scholarship from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2019-2022) as well as the DAAD Master's scholarship (2015-2017).

Her research interests include Jewish education and Jewish youth culture in interwar Poland, modern Yiddish culture, as well as contemporary Jewish museums and their educational programmes.

Since 2012 she has been involved in the March of Life organisation, working on international youth encounters and projects counteracting antisemitism.

Identity, Culture and Literature of the Zionist-oriented Polish-speaking Jewish Youth in Interwar Poland

Jewish youth organizations gained an extraordinary importance in interwar Poland. The Zionist youth organisations of different political stripes attracted by far the highest participation. Whereas some young Jews were affiliated members, others were interested well-wishers of these movements' worldview. On the whole, one can speak of a multifaceted milieu of a Zionist-oriented Jewish youth in interwar Poland.

The aim of my dissertation is to deepen the Polish-context of the Zionist youth culture and sketch a collective portrait of the Jewish young people in interbellum Poland who had a positive attitude to the Zionist enterprise, by means of analysing youth sections in the periodicals addressed to adults as well as brochures and other publications of the youth movements. It was common for the young people to send their articles, poems, novels, and letters to the editorial boards. One of my main sources are also the so-called Books of Life – handwritten collective journals of the groups within the Zionist youth movements. The questions which lie at the heart of this dissertation are the identity-forming processes as well as literary and cultural trends among the Zionist oriented Polish-speaking youth.

Using the adaptation of post-colonial theories such as contact-zones, cultural transfer, and hybridity, I will try to demonstrate that in interwar Poland a new national identity and culture in Polish was appearing among the Zionist-oriented youth in the borderlands of traditional Jewish, modern Yiddish, Polish, Hebrew, and European cultural realms. Even though the Zionist youth culture denied other sources and was Hebrew-oriented, directed towards building a new homeland in Mandate Palestine, it was placed within these contact-zones and used the motifs and symbols of their cultural domains for shaping its identity. Additionally, the source material offers insights into specific literary and cultural trends among the Polish-speaking Zionist youth. Apart from imparting information about their reading interests, it points to the significance of theatre, cinema, radio, and music in the considered youth culture. It reveals discrepancy between contempt and admiration for the popular culture.



Ekaterina Oleshkevich

E-mail: kat.oleshkevich@gmail.com

Ekaterina Oleshkevich holds B.A. (2013) and M.A. (2015) from the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Lomonosov Moscow State University. Since 2018, she is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Jewish History & Contemporary Jewry at Bar-Ilan University, Israel, writing a dissertation “History, Culture and the Experience of Jewish Childhood in Late Imperial Russia” under the supervision of Dr. Uriel Gellman. She was awarded with President’s Scholarship of

Bar-Ilan University, Blam Family Scholarship, Bar-Ilan University Rector Prize for excellence in doctoral studies, and Fellowship in East European Jewish Studies in YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Between 2013 and 2018, she had been working in the Schneerson library (branch of the Russian State Library at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow). Since 2019, she heads a project on inventorying the private archive of R. Yosef Yitzhak Schneerson at Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow.

History, Culture and the Experience of Jewish Childhood in Late Imperial Russia

The goal of my PhD project is to explore the history, culture and experience of childhood among the Jews of the European part of the Russian Empire in the modern period. This topic as well as other topics related to family and childhood are heavily under-researched in Jewish studies, and its exploration will contribute to a better understanding of the functioning of the Jewish family and Jewish society.

In my dissertation, I focus on the following aspects of the history, culture and experience of childhood. First, the dissertation examines the inner emotional world of a child as well as relationships within the family, i.e. parent-child relationships, sibling relationships, etc. Unlike previously conducted research in this field, I do not focus on rituals or on the institutions of childhood, but rather on the emotional background/experience of childhood, which aligns my research with the history of emotions. Moreover, I examine the changes in the childhood experience as part of a shift taking place in the discourse of childhood and as a part of transition to modernity. This type of research on childhood has never been done before within the framework of modern Jewish history.

Second, my dissertation explores the culture of childhood — both material and social, i.e. the material conditions of children's lives (living and sleeping arrangements, clothes, food, toys, etc.) and the social framework of being a child (gender paradigms as adapted for children, children's subculture including games, relations between children and different groups of children, etc.). Moreover, I explore the culture of childhood in the different social groups among Jews asking a question if the childhood in a rich/poor, Hasidic/Misnaged house differed principally and if there were differences between the regions.

Third, my dissertation examines the discourse of childhood among Russian Jews in the late 19th–early 20th centuries and explores whether it underwent changes within the researched period and how those changes influenced the actual experience of childhood.

Thus, my research focuses on the discourse of childhood and on the actual experience of childhood as shaped and changed by the discourse. There are quite a few sources enabling to investigate this experience, thus, my study aims to find previously unnoticed traces of it in ego-documents, namely in the autobiographies written by Jews who spent their childhood in the Pale of Settlement in the discussed period. In addition to ego-documents, I make use of more “objective” sources, such as demographic data, newspaper articles and certain, though very limited archival sources.



Norman Salusa

E-mail: salusano@hu-berlin.de

Let me briefly introduce my academic career and my research. I studied Slavic philology, religious studies, and history at the University of Leipzig and the Ruhr University of Bochum, where I obtained, respectively, my Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. Furthermore, I studied abroad in Belarus and Russia, especially at the State University for the Humanities (RGGU) in Moscow where I graduated with a Master’s degree in cultural studies. In my Master’s thesis I dealt with the question of representation of the Holocaust in Soviet literature, exemplified by the novel “Babi Yar” from Anatoly Kuznetsov. At the moment, I am employed as a research assistant at the Selma Stern Center for Jewish Studies at the Humboldt University Berlin, where I am writing my dissertation and teaching undergraduate students in cultural studies and anthropology about Jewish history. Currently, I am working on an article about the Soviet Union’s contribution to the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, more specifically about Abraham Sutzkever’s role as moral witness. In my research, I am trying to combine different methodological approaches from a variety of disciplines, such as memorial culture, sociology of literature and social and cultural history.

A Generation of Heroes and Witnesses – Jewish Soldiers in the Red Army during WW II

My dissertation focuses on Jewish soldiers in the Red Army during World War II. My aim is to better understand matters of belonging and identity by looking at private autobiographical texts, as well as public documents, such as newspaper articles, memoirs, literature, and poetry. My main research hypothesis is that a new *social generation* of young Soviet Jews was created in the institution of the Red Army, and that through their experiences during the War, these soldiers developed a consciousness as a generation of witnesses and heroes. This experience included, on the one hand, witnessing atrocities committed against the Jewish people by German soldiers and SS-Einsatzgruppen on Soviet soil and, on the other hand, serving in the military and fighting in combat. Here questions of emancipation, social participation and advancement, and loyalty to the State arise. With the help of Karl Mannheim’s “Theory of Generations,” my work divides itself into three chronological stages:

The first stage is called the *generational location*, i.e. the time before the German attack in June 1941. Secondly, the years of formation (1942-1947) when a *generation in actuality* (Generationszusammenhang) establishes itself: Here the soldiers witnessed the genocidal violence and served in the military. Thirdly, the period between 1948 and 1953 when *generational units* emerged: They consisted of typical reactions to the War experience, e.g., some of the soldiers became Zionists, other dissidents and some became even more loyal to the Soviet state and its institutions.



Andrey Shlyakhter

E-mail: andrey@uchicago.edu

Andrey Shlyakhter, currently a Title VIII Scholar at the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C, is an international historian of the Soviet Union and its neighbors. His research explores the interaction of economics, security, and ideology at state frontiers. Dr. Shlyakhter received his PhD from the University of Chicago Department of History in December 2020, with the dissertation “[Smuggler](#)

[States: Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Contraband Trade Across the Soviet Frontier, 1919-1924"](#)

The dissertation informs his postdoctoral book project, *Smuggling Across the Soviet Borders: Contraband Trades, Soviet Solutions, and the Shadow Economic Origins of the Iron Curtain, 1917-1932*. This study uncovers the coevolution of two fundamental features of the Soviet system: the black market and the border. Drawing on archives in (so far) seven countries (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and the US), it argues that, by linking Soviet consumers with the outside world against Moscow's wishes, the ports and distilleries of Riga, Tallinn, Tartu, and Harbin and the cloth factories of Łódź inadvertently fashioned the foundations of an interwar Iron Curtain. Revising the received narrative, it demonstrates that Stalin did not simply seal the border to keep Soviet citizens in, and subversive ideas out. Even before the Kremlin embraced "Socialism in One Country," the struggle against the contraband trade that blossomed during the Civil War and flourished under the mixed-market New Economic Policy (NEP) of the 1920s fostered the border control infrastructure, mechanisms of surveillance and repression, and economic autarky that would make Stalinist isolation possible. The origins of the Iron Curtain lay in the shadows of the Soviet economy and its relationship with the outside world.

While Jews do not currently figure in the book title, this is very much a Jewish story. Jews were central to the success of the contraband trade along much of the Soviet state's western border, while the traffic became a major source of sustenance for Jews on both sides of the frontier. Dr. Shlyakhter's research reveals how relationships based on trust facilitated extraordinarily elaborate, long-term transactions, reviving and renewing the imperial trade routes seemingly severed by war, revolution, and new borders. It demonstrates how contraband trade turned local peddlers and draymen into international merchants, and backwater shtetls into bustling entrepôts. It reveals how Jewish residents of urban hubs – Moscow and Minsk, Kiev and Kharkov, Warsaw and Wilno, Łódź and Lwów – nurtured these networks as financiers, distributors, producers, and consumers of contraband goods. Finally, drawing on American bank records, it uncovers the transatlantic connections that supported this traffic through the millions of US dollars sent to the former Pale by relatives and friends (mostly working-class Jews) in the New World. Dr. Shlyakhter will continue to explore this latter dimension

as a Dina Abramowicz Emerging Scholar Fellow in East European Jewish Studies at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City this fall.

At the same time, this research reveals how the centrality of Jews to the frontier trade left Jews on both sides of the border vulnerable to charges of disloyalty, corruption, and espionage. Polish officials' deliberations and press accounts excoriated Jewish dominance of this shadowy traffic as threatening everything from the food supply to state finances to state security. Local administrations demanded that applicants for frontier trade permits furnish proof of baptism. Jewish traders responded by hiring Christian cutouts, plying venal officials, and simply smuggling past Polish patrols – thereby inviting further discrimination and repressions. The traffic thus rendered the Soviet frontier one of the key sites at which the young Polish state negotiated its uneasy relationship with its Jewish citizens and drew the *internal* boundary of the Polish nation. Meanwhile, on the Soviet side of the border, the prominent role of Jews in smuggling exacerbated both the ethnic tensions that simmered under the NEP and the conflicts raging within the Soviet Jewish community itself.



Jakob Stürmann

E-Mail: Stuermann@dubnow.de

Working at the Dubnow Institute as a Research Associate since August 2020. Studied Eastern European Studies, History, and Gender Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin, the Humboldt-Universität Berlin and the University of Birmingham, funded by the Hans Böckler Foundation. Completed his M. A. degree in 2013. From 2014 to 2020 Doctoral Candidate at Freie Universität Berlin and member of the "Ludwig Rosenberg Graduate School – Historical Relations between Labour Movement and Modern Jewry", funded by the Hans Böckler Foundation. Subject of PhD thesis: "Blickwechsel – Das Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit aus der Perspektive osteuropäisch-jüdischer Sozialist/innen". Since 2017 associated member of the "Selma Stern Center for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg". From 2016 to 2017 and since May 2018 Research Assistant at the European University Viadrina, project "Digital Archive of Jewish Authors in Berlin 1933–1945", from 2010 to 2011 Junior Research Assistant at the Freie Universität Berlin, project "Charlottengrad and Scheunenviertel.

Eastern European Jewish Migrants in Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s". Since 2016 board member of the nonprofit organization |"Action Reconciliation Service for Peace", since 2020 foundation board member of the International Youth Meeting Center in Oswiecim/Auschwitz.

A CASE STUDY OF THE NOTION OF JEWISH UNITY

This research project focuses on a unique six-month world tour undertaken in the latter half of 1943 by the Soviet Jews Solomon Mikhoels and Itsik Fefer, who as representatives of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee visited numerous cities in North America and the United Kingdom. Their mission was to promote international Jewish unity in the fight against National Socialism and to solicit military, material, and financial support for the Soviet Union. Tens of thousands of Jews attended the rallies featuring the two Soviet delegates. The world tour was the climax of an appeal launched by Soviet Jews in the wake of the German invasion of their country, during which they called for the fraternization of Jewries across national and political boundaries. This trip illuminates the first ever rapprochement to take place since the October Revolution between Soviet Jewry on the one hand and American and British Jewry on the other, sparked by the Holocaust and the German war of annihilation. Indeed, this rapprochement was only made possible by the exceptional threat they faced at the time, which did not last beyond the end of the war. During this apparent window of opportunity for a rapprochement between East and West, representatives of international Jewish organizations discussed with their Soviet guests mutual ideas to improve the situation of European Jewries and to revive Jewish life after the end of the war.

Proceeding from the multiple self-conceptions of the two travelers, this study examines the notion of Jewish unity and its political, cultural, and artistic aspects. Of particular interest is the role of Yiddish, which served as the lingua franca during the world tour and through which a transnational sense of Jewish belonging was established on the basis of mutual experiences.

This research project is part of the interdisciplinary joint project "The Short Life of Soviet Yiddish Literature" funded by the "Leibniz Collaborative Excellence" program of the 2020 Leibniz Competition.



Iulia-Maria Ticărau

E-mail: ticaraiuliamaria@yahoo.it

Iulia-Maria Ticărau is a PhD candidate at "Lucian Blaga" University (ULBS). The title of her project is *The Microsystem of Jewish Literature in Romania in the First Half of the 20th Century* and is supervised by Professor. Dr. Habil Andrei Terian, Vice Rector for Research, Innovation, and Internationalization at "Lucian Blaga" University. She is teaching Romanian as a foreign language at the Faculty of Letters and Arts. The titles of some publications are: *A Dual Identity*, published in *Transylvania Journal* and *To Be Jewish, to Be Intellectual, to Be Romanian and Danubian. Zionism and Assimilation*, published in "Lucian Blaga" Yearbook..

The theme proposed for the scientific research program within the University "Lucian Blaga," the Faculty of Letters and Arts, the field of Philology, is "The Microsystem of Jewish Literature in Romania in the First Half of the 20th Century." Writers of Jewish origin who have worked in the Romanian literary field are numerous and many of them have had an overwhelming influence on the literary phenomenon in Romania, being unanimously recognized by literary critics as being valuable and original by the way they used the word and gave life to some works of unquestionable literary value. By identifying the limitations of previous research on the Jewish issue, we propose that, in our study, we should systematically address only the Jewishness translated at a fictional level by the Jewish writers who wrote in Romanian, leaving aside the other themes, and use, in our research, recent methods such as imagology and world literature with which we shall bring a new vision on this field. We believe that imagology is a suitable research method due to its multidisciplinary character, and Jewry in a literary work cannot be analyzed without reference to the social, political and the period in which it was created: "Image studies or imagology were traditionally subsumed under the non-critical notion of "national character", which was replaced by the constructivist term of "national stereotype".

For a better understanding of our thesis, we shall define, in the following, the theoretical concepts of the proposed research methodology: minor literature, namely ultra-minor literature. According to its theorists, Deleuze and Guattari, minor literature is "is a literature carved in a major language" and, at the same time, "minor literature is not a

literature written in a minor language, rather it is what a minority builds in a major language.” By defining this concept, it is obvious why we shall analyze in our study the works Jewish writers have written in Romanian and why Jewish literature is a minor literature in the Romanian literary space. The concept of ultra-minor literature was theorized by Bergur Moberg with reference to the literature written in the Faroe Islands. This concept refers both to the number of inhabitants using a particular language and to the relationship it has with another minor literature. We shall use, in our research, this concept for the reporting between Jewish literature written in Romania, Romanian literature and world literature. *Imagology. The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Character*, edited by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, shall be essential to the imagological method that we shall address in our research on the Jewish issue.



Thomas Varkonyi

E-mail: thomas.varkonyi@univie.ac.at

Tomas Varkonyi is a PhD student at Universität Wien. He also teaches a course on *Guided Reading: Antisemitism*. He finished his MA at the same university in 2016, at the Historical-Cultural European Studies department. His MA thesis was titled *Die Geschichte der Juden von Mohács 1848-1948 und ihre*

Darstellung in Denkmälern

“Galicia” in Hungarian Language and Society. Cultural History of a Pejorative Imagination.

“Galitzianer” as a pejorative for Jewish refugees was not uncommon in Vienna during and after World War One, but it disappeared almost completely through the second half of the 1920s and is -unlike “classic” anti-Semitism- virtually unknown in our days. In Hungarian discourse the “Galician Riff-Raff” was present before, during and after WWI, and is still present today. This phrase and its connotations are easily understood by Hungarian mainstream audiences as Jews not belonging to the Hungarian nation. It seemingly disappeared throughout “Communism”. But although it is evoking controversies, it is still in -or back in- use after 1990. The question is why this a-historic subject remained preserved in Hungary, while it completely disappeared in Austria?



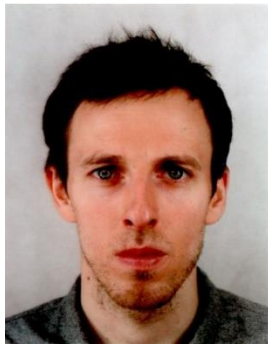
Brett Winestock

E-mail: winestock@dubnow.de

Brett Winestock received his PhD from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Stanford University in June 2020. He is currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Leibniz-Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow in Leipzig, Germany, where he serves as coordinator and member of the collaborative research project “The Short Life of Soviet Yiddish Literature.” Working in both Russian and Yiddish, his research focuses on Jewish literature and culture in the Soviet Union and accompanying issues of identity, memory, and translation. He has taught the Russian language as well as classes on Russian-Jewish literature, folklore, and the myth of St. Petersburg. He is currently preparing his dissertation for publication as a monograph entitled “The Uncensored Man: Leonid Tsytkin, Russian Writer and Soviet Jew” and has begun a postdoctoral project focusing on the lives and work of the five Yiddish writers murdered by Stalin on what was become known as “The Night of the Murdered Poets” in 1952.

“The Murdered Poets: A Collective Biography” is a problem-oriented biography of Dovid Bergelson, Dovid Hofshsteyn, Leyb Kvitko, Perets Markish, and Itsik Fefer. Despite the tremendous differences in their lives and works, all met a common end; rather than trace five individual lives, the collective biography returns to important times and places when their five lives intersected. Its settings include Kiev, where all five writers lived and wrote during the Revolution and Civil War; Berlin, which served as a literary capital for émigré culture during the early 1920s, when four of the five writers spent time in emigration; Moscow during the 1930s when all had returned to the USSR and either consciously or unconsciously became ensconced – to an inescapable degree – in the Soviet literary system. Finally, it looks at their experiences working in the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee during and after the War, when the tension between the national and the universal, between modernism and socialist realism, and between Yiddish and Soviet became the most pronounced and were ultimately used against the five defendants in their trial.

The research project is concerned with the intersecting self-conceptions of all five writers as both Soviet and Yiddish. It investigates how they themselves navigated the complex historical, political, and sociocultural pressures of a Soviet regime which encouraged the seemingly contradictory values of both communist universalism and ethnic nationalism. Using the arrests, trials, and execution which brought them together as a starting point, the project asks how these five writers became the most significant in Soviet Yiddish literature, and what it was about their lives and works which needed destroying in the eyes of the Soviet regime.



Franciszek Zakrzewski

E-mail: franciszek.zakrzewski@gmail.com

Franciszek Zakrzewski is a PhD candidate at the School for Advance Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS, Paris) and a member of the ERC Lubartworld project led by Claire Zalc. He holds a master degree in History from the Warsaw University. He was a member of the Polin Museum curatorial team and of the editorial team for the Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto – Ringelblum Archive. His research focuses on social history of Poland in the 20th century.

***Living Together and Apart in Lubartów: a Microhistory of a Small Town in Poland, 1921–1945* – Franciszek Zakrzewski’s doctoral project**

My research deals with the issue of the social and economic stratification of the population of interwar Lubartów and its implication on the fate and behaviour of town’s inhabitants during the Second World War. Such a study will provide a better understanding of behavioural patterns in local ethnically diverse communities confronted with events that undermines the social order. Although the microhistorical approach gained popularity in Jewish and Holocaust studies, no monographs have comprehensively examined the links between pre-war social structure of a town and the wartime events. By using different kind of sources and tools of socially rooted approaches, I intend to create a social portrait of interwar Lubartów – a provincial town near Lublin that counted 6102 inhabitants in 1921 – by comparing the parallel and interrelated social structures of Jewish and non-Jewish groups. Among key fields for defining the social stratification are functioning of a public administration and its

institutions, political parties and social organizations, religious life, education, economics and the town space. Internal stratifications amongst Jews and non-Jews also need to be analysed. The recreated network of intergroup and interpersonal relationships from the interwar period will allow to study how the residents of Lubartów responded to the challenges of the war: German occupation of the town, mass movements from and to the town, the separation and gradual destruction of the Jewish community of Lubartów. The established chronological framework, 1921-1945, indicates the moment of returning to stabilisation after World War I and the Polish Soviet War, at one end, and the liberation of Lubartów after World War II, at the other end.