

## Topic

2022 marks 70 years since the 1952 trial and execution of members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the Soviet Union on what has come to be known as the "Night of the Murdered Poets." Those poets, and other figures executed, had enjoyed state support in the 1920s and survived the Stalinist terror of the 1930s, but the changes in nationalities policy in a Soviet Union which was becoming increasingly Russocentric resulted in a round of anti-Jewish purges after the War. Many of the trumped-up charges at the trial included "promoting nationalism" by simply looking out for Jewish interests in the Soviet Union or merely by continuing to write in Yiddish – to the point where one of the defendants, Solomon Lozovsky, ultimately concluded that "what is on trial here is the Yiddish language."

It is not surprising that the most famous defendants were writers, as literature had played an outsized role in the forming of Soviet Yiddish culture and society. Taking the events of 1952 as a starting point, the Dubnow Institute will host a conference in Leipzig, Germany on 27 to 29 June 2022 to probe some of the tensions which characterized Soviet Yiddish literature, including questions of belonging and the relationship between universalism and particularism. The conference is based on the work of the "The Short Life of Soviet Yiddish Literature" research group, an interdisciplinary partnership between scholars of the Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow (DI), the Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung (ZfL), and the Professorship for Slavic Jewish Studies at the University of Regensburg (UR), which is funded for a period of three years by the "Leibniz Cooperative Excellence" program of the Leibniz Competition 2020.

The projects of the research group focus on poets, writers, and cultural figures who were engaged both personally and artistically in the tensions between tradition and modernity, between Jewish affiliation and the affirmation of the creation of a "new" Soviet human. Their life stories and works are explored against the backdrop of revolution, civil war, and emigration, as well as the experience of Stalinism, World War II, and the Holocaust. The presentations will touch directly on the events and protagonists of the trial itself, along with those which deal with the prior emergence and construction of Soviet Yiddish literature and culture since the October Revolution, as well as with its "afterlife" – the survival and continuation of Soviet Yiddish literature in the years after 1952.

## Venue

Literaturhaus Leipzig e. V. / Haus des Buches  
Room 3  
Gerichtsweg 28, 04103 Leipzig

## Organization

Dr. Brett Winestock (Dubnow Institute)

In cooperation with the Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung (ZfL), Berlin, and the Professorship for Slavic Jewish Studies at the University of Regensburg (UR)

## Contact and Registration

The annual conference is taking place at the Literaturhaus Leipzig. Please register at least by Thursday, June 23 to participate. Please send an email to [antwort@dubnow.de](mailto:antwort@dubnow.de) with the title of the event "Annual Conference," your name and institution (if applicable).

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## Exhibition Tour

Monday, June 27, 1 p.m.

We offer the possibility to participate in a guided tour through the exhibition "Jewish Album. Photographs by Rita Ostrovskaja" at the Dubnow Institute.

## Cover Illustration

*Gerangl* (Struggle) by Leyb Kvitko (Kharkov: Tsentral farlag, 1929). From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York.



Universität Regensburg



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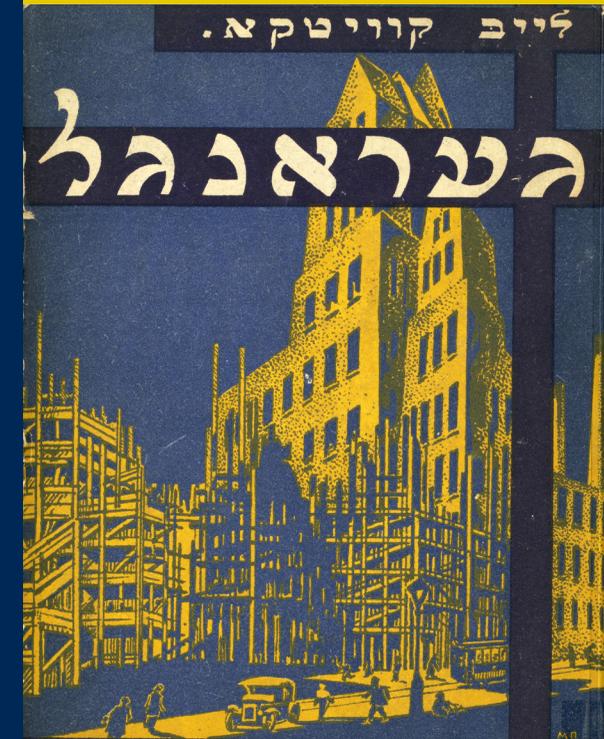
Dubnow

*Simon Dubnow*  
Institute

# "What Is on Trial Here Is the Yiddish Language"

The Making and Unmaking of Soviet Yiddish Literature

Annual Conference  
June 27–29, 2022  
Literaturhaus Leipzig



## Program

### Monday, June 27, 2022

2.15 p.m.

**Welcome Remarks/Introduction**

Yfaat Weiss  
Sabine Koller  
Matthias Schwartz  
Jan Gerber

2.45–4.15 p.m.

**Panel 1**

Chair: Elisabeth Gallas

**Daria Vakhrushova**

Revolutionary Times: Temporality in the Poetry by Perets Markish

**Tetyana Yakovleva**

Utopia in the Making of New Yiddish Literature: Kalmen Zingman's City of Future

4.45–6.15 p.m.

**Keynote Address**

Chair: Brett Winestock

**Harriet Murav**

Writing in "the Old Style" and Writing in a Late Style: Dovid Hofshteyn's Wartime Poetry

### Tuesday, June 28, 2022

9.15–10.45 a.m.

**Panel 2**

Chair: Efrat Gal-Ed

**Sasha Senderovich**

Haunted by Pogroms: Dovid Bergelson's *Mides-hadin* and the Gothic Mode

**Brett Winestock**

Across Borders, Genres, and Ideologies: How Dovid Bergelson's *The Red Army Soldier* Became *By the Telephone*

11.15 a.m.–12.30 p.m.

**Talk**

Chair: Carolin Piorun

**Sabine Koller**

Kiev 1948: Dovid Hofshteyn's Last Poem

12.30 p.m.

Lunch

2–3.30 p.m.

**Panel 3**

Chair: Matthias Schwartz

**Anna Shternshis**

(Forgotten) Women Yiddish Authors of *The Black Book*: Rakhil Kovnator and Mira Zheleznova

**Gennady Estraiikh**

The Jewish Star of Itsik Kipnis: A Story of Surveillance, Incarceration, and Rehabilitation

4–5.30 p.m.

**Panel 4**

Chair: Olaf Terpitz

**Jakob Stürmann**

Jewish Unity against National Socialism: Different Perceptions of a Soviet Plea during World War II

**Amelia Glaser**

Biography of an American Reader: Alexander Pomerantz and Soviet Yiddish Literature

7.30 p.m.

**Jiddisch-deutsche Lesung**

Chair: Jan Gerber

**Caroline Emig/Sabine Koller/Alexandra Polyan**

Zug des Lebens – die jiddische Literatur in der Sowjetunion

### Wednesday, June 29, 2022

9.15–10.45 a.m.

**Panel 5**

Chair: Daniel Weidner

**Ber Kotlerman**

Reshaping the Fate of Polish Jewry during the Holocaust: The Case of Der Nister

**Alexandra Polyan**

Peretz Markish's Poetry about the Holocaust at the Beginning of World War II and After It

11.15 a.m.–12.30 p.m.

**Talk**

Chair: Tom Navon

**Mikhail Krutikov**

Murdered Utopia of Soviet Yiddish Culture

12.30 p.m.

Lunch

2–3.30 p.m.

**Panel 6**

Chair: Jan Gerber

**Valery Dymshits**

The Teacher and the Disciple: Dovid Bergelson's Influence on Emmanuel Kazakevich's Prose

**Irina Kissin**

The Sephardic Narrative in Nathan Zabara's Historical Novel *The Revolving Wheel*

3.45–4.45 p.m.

**Final Reflections**

Efrat Gal-Ed  
Olaf Terpitz  
Moderated by Matthias Schwartz

## Speakers

**Prof. Dr. Valery Dymshits**, European University at Saint Petersburg/Saint Petersburg State University | **Caroline Emig**, University of Regensburg | **Prof. Dr. Gennady Estraiikh**, New York University | **Prof. Dr. Efrat Gal-Ed**, Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf | **Dr. Elisabeth Gallas**, Dubnow Institute, Leipzig | **PD Dr. Jan Gerber**, Dubnow Institute, Leipzig | **Prof. Dr. Amelia Glaser**, University of California San Diego | **Irina Kissin**, ZfL Berlin | **Prof. Dr. Sabine Koller**, University of Regensburg | **Prof. Dr. Ber Kotlerman**, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan | **Prof. Dr. Mikhail Krutikov**, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor | **Prof. Dr. Harriet Murav**, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign | **Dr. Tom Navon**, Dubnow Institute, Leipzig | **Carolin Piorun**, Dubnow Institute, Leipzig | **Dr. Alexandra Polyan**, University of Regensburg | **Dr. Matthias Schwartz**, ZfL Berlin | **Prof. Dr. Sasha Senderovich**, University of Washington, Seattle | **Prof. Dr. Anna Shternshis**, University of Toronto | **Jakob Stürmann**, Dubnow Institute, Leipzig | **PD Dr. Olaf Terpitz**, University of Graz | **Daria Vakhrushova**, Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf | **Prof. Dr. Daniel Weidner**, Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg | **Prof. Dr. Yfaat Weiss**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem/Dubnow Institute, Leipzig | **Dr. Brett Winestock**, Dubnow Institute, Leipzig | **Dr. Tetyana Yakovleva**, Yiddish Arts and Academics Association of North America, San Diego