



Bukovina Conference, March 15th, 2016

Abstracts and Bios

First Panel:

Bukovina and Czernowitz :

The Ethnical Uniqueness of the Multi-Cultural city and region

Dr. Ronit Fisher

Short Abstract

Czernowitz, Bukovina's Capital, was known as "Vienna of the East", and was described by Europe's most compelling postwar Jewish German-speaking poet, Paul Celan, as a city- *"Where People and Books Used to Live"*.

In these words Celan is referring to the Cultural unique atmosphere, which flourished in this heterogenic region and especially in its multi-cultural capital – Czernowitz.

In this article I wish to examine the uniqueness of this multi-cultural region and its capital through the perspectives of ethnicity, religious and cultural characteristics during the inter-wars period.

Dr. Ronit Fisher: The Academic coordinator of the Research Center of the history of Romanian Jewry at the Hebrew University and teaches courses about the Holocaust at the Department of Jewish History at the University of Haifa. Since mid-2013 she works as a "Historian-Consultant" specialist for the history of Romania Jewry during the Holocaust at the legal division of the Authority for the Holocaust survivors' rights, at the Israeli Ministry of Finance.

Dr. Fisher was Yad Vashem's D.Gurtner Scholarship for PhD students (2003-4), a Research colleague at the Bucerius Research Institute for German History and Culture, at the Struchlitz Holocaust Research and Study Institute at the Haifa University and at the Simon Dubnow Institute at the University of Leipzig.

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In the past Dr. Fisher worked also as the Dean of Students at the Academic Yzreel Valley College and the Director of the Haifa's branch of the Society for Protection of Nature in Israel (NGO).

Publications: Dr. Fisher's book: *From the Fields of Remembrance*, Ghetto Fighters' House Publishing, Israel 2009 (in Hebrew)

Recent articles: "*Prelude to the Holocaust in Romania: The significance of Eugenics, Ethnic and Race in the development of the Romanian's national identity*" in : Nancy Rupprecht and Wendy Koenig (Eds), *Global Perspectives on the Holocaust: History, Identity and Legacy*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing House (Newcastel, UK, 2015), pp. 252-271. ; "Murderous Summer," review article on the books: Henry Eaton, *The Origins and Onset of the Romanian Holocaust*, Simon Geissbühler, *Blutiger Juli — Rumäniens Vernichtungskrieg und der vergessene Massenmord an der Juden 1941* in *Yad-Vashem Studies*, (Jerusalem, 2015) Vol 43 (1). pp.259-271 ; "Transnistria," in Friedman, J., *The Routledge History of the Holocaust* (Routledge Publishing House, NY, 2011), pp. 277–290. ; "*Between Ethnic-Cleansing and Genocide: An Alternative perspective of the Holocaust of Romanian Jews* " in: Yad-Vashem Studies, Jerusalem, 2012, 1/40, pp. 157-196 ; and more...

Describing and Imagining Czernowitz – Prof. Zvi Yavetz and His City

Dr. Raphael Vago

Short Abstract

The lecture focuses on Zvi Yavetz's book "My Czernowitz" by presenting the deep personal connection to his native city, as seen from the perspective of the young boy growing up in an era of rising anti-Semitism and fascism and through the light of the later tragedy which befell to the city's Jewry. Yavetz did not intend and did not write a "history" of "his" Czernowitz, but presented a vivid analysis of the social fabric, culture, spiritual life and economy of the city's Jewry. The internal divisions of the Jewish community are presented through a geo-social analysis, the cleavages among the various neighborhoods differing in their topographical layout. The encounters and interactions with the local society – Romanian and with the other minorities, are also reflected through examples from his own childhood. By ample analysis and presentation of the local media and intellectual life, the impact of politics, of dramatic changes in Romanian political life, as the rise and fall of the extremist Goga-Cuza

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government – the atmosphere in the second half of the thirties is narrated through a combination of personal and family memoirs and the "meta-history" of the period. The lecture outlines Yavetz's methodology in injecting at the right places quotations from the eminent intellectuals of the city, their poems and narratives. Indeed, as Yavetz's called Czernowitz , "a place where people and books lived". It emphasizes Yavetz's treatment of the "common people" and the elites, by clearly connecting between his approach to the social history of the city's Jews to his own research on ancient Rome.

Through Yavetz's book Czernowitz comes alive as a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic microcosmos, a surviving island of cosmopolitan life in an age of the gathering storm.

Dr. Raphael Vago

Since 1972 at Tel-Aviv University, Department of History, The Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry and the Cummings Center for Russian and East European Studies. Main focus of teaching and research : Modern history of Central and Eastern Europe, ethnicity, nationalities, extremist movements, the Holocaust, anti-Semitism.

Member of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, chairperson of the Contents' Committee of the Museum of Romanian Jewry in A.M.I.R.

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Back to Czernowitz

Dr. Florence Heymann

Short Abstract:

The roots tourism, which is especially developed in the last decade, has an identity research function linked to the nostalgia of childhood places. My paper refers to roots travels in Czernowitz, Chernivtsi today, and tries to show of which space and time people speak when they talk of the town of their childhood. I will speak about two types of practices: the first, "disembodied" that of the cyberspace through a listserv, the Czernowitz-L, which includes people from Czernowitz and their descendants; the second, "embodied," relates some actual experiences of return to the town. In both cases, multiple paradoxes that accompany these exchanges and pilgrimages are highlighted. Finally, the last subject to be discussed is the evolution of the nostalgia according to the place of the actors in the succession of the generations.

Dr. Florence HEYMANN

A Social and historical anthropologist, works as CNRS Researcher at the Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem -CNRS-MAEE (USR 3132 du CNRS)

Her main research fields : Family frameworks of memory, Construction and changes of identity in social groups, The Holocaust in Romania and Constructions and deconstructions of religious identities in Israel.

Publications: Books

Les Déserteurs de Dieu. Ces ultra-orthodoxes qui sortent du ghetto, Paris, Grasset (2015) . ; *L'horreur oubliée. La Shoah roumaine*, numéro spécial de la *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah*, sous la direction de Florence Heymann, Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine et Georges Bensoussan, n° 194,(janvier-juin 2011).

Un Proche-Orient sans romantisme, journal de voyage, par Leopold Weiss, Paris, CNRS Éditions,(janvier 2005).

Le Crépuscule des lieux, Paris, Stock, « Un ordre d'idées » (Prix Wizo 2004).

And many Articles about Czernowitz and Bukovina

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Second Session:

THE AFTERMATH OF BUKOVINAN MULTICULTURALISM: PAUL CELAN, DAN PAGIS AND AHARON APPELFELD

Prof. Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

Short Abstract:

This talk will sketch in very broad strokes the cultural paths that three of the most prominent writers from Bukovina took in the aftermath of the *shoah*—two in Israel and the third in France/Europe. The central argument is that while the post-Holocaust poetry of Celan and Pagis is inflected by the multicultural traditions and values that characterized the ambiance into which they were born, Appelfeld in his mature fiction took a very different path into a more monolithic cultural and ethnic place.

Prof. Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi is Professor Emerita of General and Comparative Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She has written on subjects ranging from representations of the *shoah* in postwar American, Israeli and European culture to the configurations of exile and homecoming in contemporary Jewish literature. In 2007 she became a Guggenheim Fellow for her current project on “Jerusalem and the Poetics of Return.”

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Jewish Identity and Soviet Policy in Postwar Chernivtsi: **The Case of the All-Ukrainian State Jewish Theater**

Dafna Dolinko

Short Abstract:

It is no surprise that most academic researches and personal memoirs on “Jewish Czernowitz” choose to end their works with the immediate postwar years. The trauma of the Holocaust and the mass “transfer” of Jews from Soviet Bukovina to Romania do indeed serve as an “end of an era” – the “Old Czernowitz” Jewish community and its German-Jewish identity did effectively disappear from the city’s cultural and ethnic landscape. However, this did not mean that the city itself had lost its Jewish vibrancy. On the contrary, postwar Chernivtsi, as it was known at the time, became a major Jewish center. It was during these years that a new type of Jewish culture flourished in the city – a Soviet-Jewish one, its operative language being Yiddish.

This new culture did not develop ex nihilo. Its roots were planted and nurtured by the Ukrainian Soviet government, who aimed to use it as a tool to indoctrinate and appease the non-Sovietized Jewish population of this volatile Ukrainian region. In the eyes of the government, the Jews of Chernivtsi and Northern Bukovina posed a threat to its aspirations of a unified Ukraine. Due to the character of the Holocaust in Romania and thanks to the actions taken by the Cernauti wartime mayor, a relatively large percentage of the city’s Jews had survived. They were later joined by Jews arriving from the countryside. Consequently, Jews constituted between 40-50% of Chernivtsi’s immediate postwar population. These Jews did not undergo the intensive Sovietization programs of the interwar years, and were therefore characterized by a stronger Jewish identity than that of their Sovietized Jewish counterparts. This identity was further strengthened by the extreme anti-Semitic wartime violence.

Relying on previously applied Soviet minority policies, the Ukrainian Soviet government implemented two policy lines when dealing with the region’s Jewish population: oppression and deportation on the one hand and support and pragmatic use on the other. This second policy line was anomalous in the Soviet Jewish landscape at the time, and it was this policy that brought the Soviet-Jewish culture to

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Chernivtsi. In order to develop this “Jewish-Yiddish in Form and Socialist in Content” culture, the local government established two Yiddish language schools, and also “imported” a Soviet-Jewish theater to the city – the “Kiev State Jewish Theater” which later became the “All-Ukrainian State Jewish Theater”.

The activities of this theater show how local authorities strived to use it to their own gain, hoping its repertoire would “enlighten” the non-Sovietized Chernivtsi Jews. However, the idea that one could develop a purely socialist “content” within a politically harmless national “form” proved illusory. The theater’s members themselves, though Sovietized, were greatly affected by the events of the Holocaust and by their contact with the local Jewish population. Consequently their Jewish identity was strengthened. This led to the creation of a more “Jewish” repertoire which resonated with the local audience. Thus it seems that by hoping to assimilate Chernivtsi Jews into Soviet society, the Ukrainian Soviet government had inadvertently supplied them with a means to express their Jewish identity.

Mrs. Dafna Dolinko has a MA degree in Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. During her studies Mrs. Dolinko had won many excellence prizes and awards, including the Pauker Family fellowship. Currently Mrs. Dolinko works at International school for Holocaust at Yad Vashem

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My Bukovinians

The Author Nava Semel

Short Abstract:

Author and playwright Nava Semel talks about Bukovina which is at the center of her upcoming novel. The story is inspired by her grandparents' marriage, beginning in Chernowitz 1914 and ending in Israel 1968. Nava recalls her childhood with a family that spoke both German and Yiddish. Through her writing she discovers the lost homeland of her ancestors and tries to revive the some of the lost heritage of her beloved Bukovinians.

Nava Semel

Author and playwright Nava Semel was born in Jaffa- Tel Aviv in 1954 and has an MA in Art History from TLV University. She has worked as a journalist, art critic, TV, radio and music producer. She published nineteen books, plays, opera libretti, TV scripts and poetry. Many of her works have been adapted for radio, film, TV and the stage in Israel, Europe and the USA. Her books were translated into many languages. Semel has received numerous prizes, including the American National Jewish Book Award (1990), Women Writers of the Mediterranean Award (1996), the Israeli Prime Minister's Prize (1996), Best Radio Drama Award in Austria (1996), Woman of the Year in Literature of the City of Tel Aviv (2007), and "The Best Seven" of the German Radio 2010. Nava Semel is a member of the Board of Directors of *Massuah - the Institute for Holocaust Studies* and was a member of the Board of Governors of *Yad Vashem* for many years. She is married with three children, living in Tel Aviv.

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