

International Conference · June 29-30, 2026

Call for Papers

Between Perestroika and the War in Ukraine: Alternative Temporalities in Eastern European and Jewish Histories

hosted by the Research Center for the History of
Transformations (RECET), University of Vienna



in cooperation with the **Leonid Nevzlin Research Center for Russian and East European Jewry** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem); **Leibniz-Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung (ZZF)**, Potsdam; **Central European University (CEU)**, Vienna; **Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe**, Marburg; **Bundesinstitut für Kultur und Geschichte des östlichen Europa (BKGE)**, Oldenburg; **Nordost-Institut an der Universität Hamburg**; **Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf**; **Forschungsverbund Ambivalenzen des Sowjetischen**.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the ensuing Russo-Ukraine War has led to an intensive set of re-evaluations regarding the recent history of the region. Central in these debates is the question of Soviet legacy: to what extent current events are rooted in late Soviet politics and culture and how the history of the Soviet collapse foreshadowed today's political and cultural fault lines. At the same time, Jewish life in the post-Soviet space, often reduced to a narrative of either migration or "nationalization" within the newly established states, deserves reconsideration.

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CfP deadline: February 15, 2026

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Hosted by the University of Vienna's Research Center for the History of Transformations (RECET), this two-day international conference aims to bring together scholars from two fields that too often work separately: Soviet/post-Soviet history and Jewish studies.

Its aim is to challenge the dominant narratives of both fields by telling the story of Jewish ‘staying’ as well as ‘leaving’ and refocus the attention of research onto communities outside the large metropolises. Building on the successful experience of the “Thinking Beyond the Soviet Jewry Narrative” Conference in Marburg (2023), this conference will explore the following interrelated questions by viewing the period between Perestroika and the War in Ukraine as a distinct chapter in the history of Eastern Europe and its Jewish communities:

What insights can a shift in focus away from political elites of Moscow and St. Petersburg offer into the history of the region, the fate of one of its most prominent minority communities, and broader questions of historical transition? How might it reshape our understanding of the *longue durée* of Soviet and post-Soviet studies, Jewish studies, and the trajectory of European societies since 1945?

In order to elucidate these points, conference organizers welcome individual paper submissions on the following central themes that will be addressed over the course of the two-day program in Vienna:

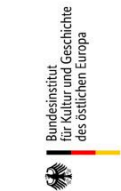
- What does the period between Perestroika (broadly defined) and the current War in Ukraine tell us about the way we divide time into historical periods within the context of Soviet and Jewish histories? Is this, indeed, a new chapter? Or a continuation of earlier historical developments?



LEONID NEVZLIN RESEARCH CENTER
for Russian and East European Jewry



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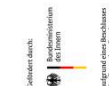
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- What do we gain (or lose) by looking at Soviet history alongside Jewish history in this region? Do such comparisons inevitably demonstrate that Jews are “entangled into” Soviet society and history? Or was the Jewish experience essentially different?
- A key part of Jewish society in this period is the very experience of packing, moving and relocating. What can migration studies, the growth of the post-Soviet Jewish diaspora and the re-alignment of post-Soviet Jewish culture and society teach us about this period?
- What can we learn about the dilemmas of migration (“should I stay, or should I go,”) when comparing Jewish residents of late Soviet and post-Soviet society to other diasporic minority groups (such as Germans, Greeks, Armenians, Finns etc.). Which unique or general patterns emerge when focusing on “the Jewish experience”?
- What can artistic renditions (visual, musical, literary) tell us about this period that political or social histories fail to grasp?
- What do monuments and museums as well as public debates regarding these physical markers of memory teach us about the power of memory, mythology, and nostalgia in periods of flux? And how have different actors of memory politics reconceptualized memory narratives over time?
- What role do leading Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals, philanthropists and politicians play in shaping such projects of civic and cultural entrepreneurship?
- What can we learn by looking at these and related questions in neighboring countries of the former Eastern bloc, from Poland to Bulgaria?

To participate, please send the abstract of your paper (up to 500 words) and your short bio (up to 300 words) to apl. Prof. Jannis Panagiotidis, RECET, Vienna (jannis.panagiotidis@univie.ac.at) by **February 15, 2026**. Organizers plan to cover accommodation (up to three nights) and travel costs for the accepted participants, depending on the availability of funds.

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