

OVERLOOKED:

**Revisiting the Histories
of Ghettos in Occupied
Territories of Contemporary
Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania,
and Moldova**



Place:

**Lviv, 6 Bohomoltsia Street,
conference room / online**



Dates:

13–14 October, 2025

The history of ghettos is at the core of the ways the Holocaust and, more generally, the Second World War is studied and represented. Together with the history of camps, the history of ghettos constitutes historiographical and conceptual cornerstones of Holocaust history. The “Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945” lists over 40,000 sites of persecution, forced labor, imprisonment, and murder, and over 1150 ghettos in Nazi-occupied and Nazi-allied Europe and North Africa. The experiences of ghettos are crucial for understanding the experiences of the Holocaust on the ground. Exploring different trajectories of ghettos’ establishment, functioning and destruction “from below” allows for tracing diverse dynamics in Nazi anti-Jewish murderous policies, entangled relations with non-Jewish residents and neighbors, including the involvement of the latter in mass murder of Jews, as well as lasting legacies of the Holocaust on Jewish communities and individual lives as well as on the places of their life and killings. Most of what we know about ghettos during World War II, as well as how the public imagines them, comes from research and cultural portrayals of the larger ghettos. The archetypal image of the ghetto is shaped by Warsaw, the largest and most extensively documented ghetto. There is a long list of academic works, digital projects, and films, to name just major formats. Over the last two decades, we have gained a deeper understanding of ghettos in major cities of Central Europe, such as Budapest (Cole, 2003) and Theresienstadt (Hajkova, 2020). Smaller towns rarely get to be the focus of a scholarly monograph. Yet, this perspective is promising, and new publications start to appear, for example, about the ghetto in Zdolbuniv (Dolhanov, 2024). Some more are in the process of research and writing.

This shape of historiographic knowledge partly inspired the title of the seminar, which begins with the word “overlooked.” When we hear “overlooked”, we might first think of smaller ghettos, typically located in towns or semi-rural areas. Yet, being overlooked does not necessarily depend on size. Historiographies can produce blind spots because dominant structures and perspectives define what is considered central, what is peripheral or marginal, and what goes entirely unaccounted for. The case of Lviv/Лwów/קירעבמעל/Lemberg illustrates how certain experiences and spaces are neglected in the historical record, not because they were historically insignificant, but because they fell out of historiographical boundaries. These boundaries were defined by postwar political borders, as well as centers and peripheries of attention within nationally shaped historical narratives. In other words, the narratives of the Holocaust in Poland focused more on the cities within post-1945 borders (like Warsaw or Łódź), while the narratives of the Holocaust in Ukraine focus on the Babi Yar in Kyiv, which represents thousands of ravines and a story of the Holocaust by bullets (Berkhoff, 2004; Desbois, 2008). This raises the critical question: why and how some locations remain overlooked, and how might we expand our gaze to include perspectives and sites that have traditionally been marginalized? By interrogating these gaps, we aim to challenge and broaden the frameworks through which the history of ghettos is conceptualized and understood.

Our aim, therefore, is not merely to extend the list of studied ghettos but to explore the possibilities of revisiting the very notion of the ghetto by focusing on some of the ghettos that have been overlooked. We hope that this workshop will launch a series of events and cooperation formats that will bring scholars to reflect on the ghetto as a concept and a notion, as a historical phenomenon and societal practice, as well as the ways it has been historiographically constructed. One way to do this would be to revisit some of the temporal and spatial dimensions by focusing on everyday interactions, networks, and practices, as well as experiences, expertise, emotions, and sensory realities. Reflecting on available and possible sources would be another. The richness of the scholarship on the Warsaw Ghetto reflects the extraordinary collection of sources, namely the Oneg Shabbat underground archive. In most other cases, what remains and is available are documents from the occupying authorities, memoirs, and sometimes artworks, which necessitate a different approach and also frame the questions we can ask. Thus, one avenue of research would be to explore potential new sources as well as the potential of existing ones. In examining what has been overlooked, we aim to reflect on the conceptual frameworks in contemporary scholarship, to sketch new perspectives on how ghettos can be studied and understood, to ask what broader contexts might be considered and how developing a more nuanced, inclusive, and multidimensional history of ghettos can contribute to a better understanding of the experiences of war and occupation, and their legacies in the region and beyond.

In this process, the format of the workshop is crucial. We envision an open and dialogical space, where participants can share insights, raise questions, and collectively shape the direction of future cooperative research. This workshop represents a first step toward discussing and establishing the what and how of further inquiry – exploring ways to build both regional and international networks that ensure the development, continuity, and sustainability of research. It is designed to serve as a framework for new collaborations and cooperative projects, laying the groundwork for ongoing scholarly exchange.

Looking ahead, we imagine a dynamic, multi-year design spanning three to five years, capable of accommodating both individual and group project(s) within a research network, united by the common and connected goals. The scale, structure, and capacity of this will be central topics of discussion on the second day of our first workshop. By thinking collectively about long-term planning, we aim to foster a research environment that is both collaborative and adaptable, capable of supporting diverse inquiries while maintaining continuity and shared purpose.

11–12.10

ARRIVALS

13.10

DAY ONE

9:45

Meeting in front of the 6 Bohomoltsia St.

10:00–11:30

Conversation/walk “Lviv Ghetto: Spaces & Questions”

11:30–12:30

Coffee break and informal conversation at the Khotkevych Palace of Culture, established as the House of the Lviv Municipal Employees (Dom Pracowników Gminnych m. Lwowa)

12:30–14:00

Conversation/walk “Lviv Ghetto: Spaces & Questions” continues

14:00–15:00

Lunch at cafe “Zustrich”

15:00–15:30

Transfer to the conference room (6 Bohomoltsia St.)

15:30–17:30

On Methods, Themes and Cases. Working Session I

The session will have two parts on Day One and Day Two, combining brief inputs with a more in-depth discussion. In brief inputs, we ask researchers to share reflections on selected methods and themes in their current research and also suggest possible avenues for future research, their own or in general. In the discussion section, these brief inputs will serve as inspiration for a dynamic conversation, in which we will articulate and explore possible ideas, directions, and formats for advancing research on the history of ghettos in the region.

Moderation: François Guesnet

15:30–16:30 Inputs (ca.10 min each)

Natalia Aleksion (online)

Ayelet Eva Herbst

Nadia Skokova

Vladyslava Moskalets

Marie Moutier-Bitan (online)

Liviu Carare (online)

16:30–17:30 Discussion

17:30–18:00

Coffee break

18:00–20:00

Screening of Dana Kavelina’s film “Lemberg Machina”
Discussion moderated by Vladyslava Moskalets

20:30

Dinner at the restaurant Atlas (45 Rynok Square)

14.10

DAY TWO

11:00–13:30

On Methods, Themes and Cases. Working Session II

Moderation: Liana Blikharska

11:00–12:00 Inputs (ca.10 min each)

Natalia Romik
Katarzyna Person
Pavlo Khudish
Petro Dolhanov
Ana Bărbulescu

12:00–13:30 Discussion

13:30–15:00

Lunch / Cafe Vitalnia

15:00–17:00

Synthesis. Working Session III

In the concluding working session, we will reflect and discuss together on possible forms, modes, and timeline, funding, and networks, etc. It will be a flexible format of conversation, tinkering, and thinking together to articulate ideas and directions of potential interest, and find ways to connect and cooperate for advancing such a research initiative.

Moderation: Sofia Dyak, Iryna Klymenko

17:00–18:30

Free time

18:30

Public Lecture “The Hour of Revenge. Individual Pursuit of Retribution and Emotional Landscape of Post-war Europe” by Katarzyna Person

Moderation: Liana Blikharska

20:00

Dinner reception at 6 Bohomoltsia St.

15.10

DEPARTURES

PARTICIPANTS

Joining offline

Ana Bărbulescu
Elie Wiesel Institute, Bucharest

Andrij Bojarov
independent curator, Lviv /
Tallinn

Liana Blikharska
Center for Urban History, Lviv

Sofia Dyak
Center for Urban History, Lviv

Petro Dolhanov
Center for Digital History, Rivne

Ayelet Eva Herbst
Ludwig Maximilian University
of Munich

Roksolyana Holovata
Center for Urban History, Lviv

Pavlo Hudish
Uzhgorod National University

Iryna Klymenko
Research Centre Ukraine /
Max Weber Foundation, Lviv

Taras Nazaruk
Center for Urban History /
University of Hagen

Katarzyna Person,
Warsaw Ghetto Museum

Nadia Skokova,
Center for Urban History, Lviv

Vladyslava Moskalets,
Center for Urban History /
Ukrainian Catholic University,
Lviv

François Guesnet,
University College London

Natalia Romik,
Senna Collective, Warsaw

Inna Zolotar,
Center for Urban History, Lviv

Andrii Usach,
After Silence, Lviv

Joining online

Hanna Abakunova
University of Alberta

Natalia Aleksion
University of Florida

Liviu Carare
United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum, Washington

Natalia Ivchik
United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum, Washington

Natalia Lazar
United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum, Washington

Marie Moutier-Bitan
CERCEC/EHESS, Paris

Luiza Nader
Art Academy in Warsaw

**Magdalena Saryusz-
Wolska**
German Historical Institute (DHI),
Warsaw

Program Committee:

Sofia Dyak
Center for Urban History

Iryna Klymenko
Research Centre Ukraine /
Max Weber Foundation

Vladyslava Moskalets
Center for Urban History /
Ukrainian Catholic University

Nadia Skokova
Center for Urban History

Organizational Committee:

Sofia Andrusyshyn
Center for Urban History

Mariana Mazurak
Center for Urban History

Nataliya Machalina
Research Centre Ukraine /
Max Weber Foundation

The workshop is organized by the Center for Urban History and the Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation in partnership with the Warsaw Ghetto Museum.



Max Weber Foundation
Research Centre
Ukraine
.....

