



AUSCHWITZ JEWISH CENTER FELLOWS PROGRAM – A BRIDGE TO HISTORY FELLOWS 2017

Guy Aldridge

University of Maryland – College Park

Degree: Ph.D.

Field: European History

Previous Degrees: Master of Arts in European History, Bachelor of Arts in Modern European History & German Studies

Graduation Year: 2020

Guy Aldridge is a doctoral student in Modern European History at the University of Maryland, College Park. He earned his MA in History at Ohio University after completing a double major in History and German Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for his BA. Guy's research focuses on intersecting themes in transnational Western European history, especially Catholicism and political-intellectual discourse. An additional subfield to which he contributes is the history of the Holocaust, and has worked with the Mandel Center in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum both as a Summer Graduate Research Assistant and as a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* project. His current research in that area investigates the gray area between compulsory and voluntary labor during the Holocaust and its relationship to the machinations of the Nazi bureaucracy.

Laura Cohen

Rutgers University

Degree: Ph.D.

Field: Conflict Resolution and Human Rights

Previous Degrees: Master of Science in Global Affairs with a concentration in Human Rights, Master of Arts in Media Studies, Bachelor of Arts in Media Production

Graduation Year: 2018

Laura B. Cohen is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Division of Global Affairs and a graduate assistant at the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University. Her research focuses on the intersection of transitional justice and contested narratives at memorials erected at sites of atrocity in post-conflict societies. Laura's forthcoming dissertation builds upon the extensive fieldwork she has conducted across Bosnia and Herzegovina since 2010. Additionally, her chapter about the Srebrenica Memorial was recently published in the edited volume, "Understanding Atrocities: Remembering, Representing and Teaching Genocide" (University of Calgary Press, 2017). She has presented various aspects of her research about the memorialization of the Srebrenica genocide in numerous national and international conferences, workshops, and panels. Previously, Laura's professional career included stints at Ogilvy and Mather and MTV: Music Television. She received her MS degree from New York University's Center of Global Affairs in Human Rights and a MA degree in Media Studies from the New School for Social Research.

Lauren Fedewa

University of Vermont

Degree: Master of Arts

Field: History

Previous Degrees: Bachelor of Arts in History and Germanic Studies

Graduation Year: 2018

After earning a BA in History and German at the University of Maryland in 2015, where she was awarded both history and German departmental scholarships, Lauren Fedewa completed a year of service as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) member with the Jewish Social Service Agency's Holocaust Survivor Program in Rockville, MD. In 2016, upon receiving a prestigious Graduate Fellowship from the University of Vermont's (UVM) History Department, as well as a Travel/Research Fellowship from UVM's Center for Holocaust Studies, Lauren began her MA in History with a concentration in Holocaust studies. While completing her MA at UVM, she is employed as a Graduate Research Assistant for professors Jonathan Huener, Francis Nicosia, and Alan Steinweis. Her MA research will focus on social interactions and relationships between Germans and foreign forced laborers in Germany during World War II. Over the past few years she has held several internships with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), most recently with the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies working on the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* project. She has also been awarded the Baden-Württemberg-Stipendium, which included intensive German language courses and an internship at the Museum of History in Stuttgart, Germany, and has volunteered for Amizade's program "Witness to History: From the Holocaust to the Revival of Jewish Life in Poland" in Oswiecim, Poland. This summer she will work as a Graduate Research Assistant for the USHMM's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies.

Megan Maggi

George Washington University

Degree: Master of Arts

Field: 20th Century American History

Previous Degrees: Bachelor of Arts in History

Graduation Year: 2017

After graduating from George Mason University with a Bachelor's in history, Megan Maggi began working as Content Manager and Producer for The American Veterans Center, a non-profit organization based in Arlington, Virginia. Megan produces documentary-style videos of veterans' oral histories, has worked on several TV broadcasts, and has contributed to regional Emmy-winning works. She recently completed a Master's degree in 20th Century American history at George Washington University. Her thesis research focused on the Armenian Genocide in American memory and the politics of commemoration. Megan hopes to continue with video production, eventually obtain a PhD., and teach history at the college level. In her spare time, she writes and dances as creative outlets.

Amber Martinez

Georgia State University

Degree: Ph.D.

Field: Modern European History

Previous Degrees: Master of Arts in American Studies

Graduation Year: 2019

Amber Martinez is in the third year of her Doctor of Philosophy in History degree at Georgia State University. Her fields of interest include Early Modern Europe, Modern Europe, and Public History. Amber's research explores the role of *Muselmänner* in Holocaust history and memory. She completed her MA in American Studies and her BA in American History with a Public History certificate from Kennesaw State University. Her MA thesis focused on Japanese American internment during World War II, for which she created an online exhibition, *A Tragedy of War*, in conjunction with a physical exhibit at the Kennesaw State University Museum of History and Holocaust Education. Some of her previous work experience includes conducting oral history interviews, compiling and syncing interviews to an oral history database, preparing exhibition space at Emory University's Michael C. Carlos Museum, and teaching World Civilizations to 1500 and American History at Georgia Highlands College. Amber attended a seminar at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2015 entitled "Introduction to Holocaust Studies Through the Records of the International Tracing Service Digital Collection" where she had the opportunity to do research using ITS. Looking ahead, her goal is to expand her knowledge and source material on *Muselmänner* through research in archives, museums, and oral histories.

Elysa McConnell

University of Ottawa

Degree: Ph.D.

Field: History

Previous Degrees: Master of Arts in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies with a Collaborative in Jewish Studies, Bachelor of Arts in History and Philosophy

Graduation Year: 2019

Elysa Ivie McConnell is a second year PhD Candidate in the Department of History at the University of Ottawa. Elysa's doctoral thesis explores the converging and diverging experiences of Jewish and ethnic minority communities in the northeastern Italian borderlands during the Fascist era, the Holocaust, and the postwar period from 1918-1948. Her research explores the ways that historical, political and ideological narratives impact the construction of 'ingroups' and 'outgroups' within regional, national and transnational contexts, and examines how certain narratives of 'othering' create conditions for interethnic conflict, systemic oppression of marginalized groups, and in some cases, violence and genocide. Elysa received her MA in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies with a Collaborative in Jewish Studies from the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto in June 2015, and received an Honours BA with a double major in History and Philosophy from the University of Toronto in November 2013. She attended the Leo Baeck Summer University in Jewish Studies at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in 2014, and completed the Foundation Year Programme at the University of King's College in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 2010. At the University of Ottawa, Elysa recently organized the History Graduate Student Association's 13th Annual Pierre Savard Conference and is currently a student member of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre.

Jennifer Popowycz

Louisiana State University

Degree: Ph.D.

Field: History

Previous Degrees: Master of Arts in History, Bachelor of Arts in History

Graduation Year: 2019

Jennifer Popowycz earned a BA in History from Appalachian State University in 2006 and a MA from North Carolina State University in 2011, where she was admitted to the National Scholars Honor Society and Phi Theta Alpha Honors Society. While at North Carolina State University she also worked as a Teaching Assistant and presented her master's thesis, "An Ever Closer Union? European Integration in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century," at the North Carolina State University's Historical Graduate Association Conference in 2011. Before applying to a Ph.D. program, she taught World Civilization and a number of American History courses as an Adjunct Professor at St. Augustine's University. At Louisiana State University, she works as a Teaching Assistant; has presented papers at Louisiana State University and Toronto University; is an active member in the History Graduate Student Association (HGSA) on campus; and works on the HGSA's Conference Committee, organizing the annual graduate historical conference. Jennifer is also a member of the American Historical Association and the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies. Her research interests include the socio-economic aspects of the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, the relationship between forced labor and the Holocaust, and how forced labor campaigns challenged postwar reconstruction when many Eastern European displaced persons refused to return home. Other academic interests include European political integration after the Second World War; global and transnational patterns, causes, consequences, and problems of migration, both forced and voluntary; and the relationship between Soviet nationalization policies and economic policy in the USSR during the interwar period.

Esther Selman

University of Haifa

Degree: Master of Arts

Field: Holocaust Studies

Previous Degrees: Bachelors in Human Rights

Graduation Year: 2017

Originally from England, Esther earned a BA in Human Rights and Drama at Kingston University graduating with First Class Honours. Majoring in Human Rights, Esther's research interests were orientated towards the sociology of genocide. Esther then moved on to study her Masters in Holocaust Studies as part of the Weiss-Livnat International MA program at the University of Haifa in Israel. She is currently writing her MA thesis, which focuses on how states respond to contemporary victims of genocide undertaking a case study of Israel. Esther has volunteered with Holocaust survivors both in the UK and in Israel, has worked on commemoration products for Yom HaShoah, and has interned as a curator at the Ghetto Fighter's House Museum in Israel. Currently, Esther is curating a Holocaust exhibition and educational program at the Jewish Museum in Budapest after which she will return to Berlin to complete her thesis. She hopes to become a tour guide at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp this coming summer.

Ashley Valanzola

George Washington University

Degree: Ph.D.

Field: History

Previous Degrees: Master of Arts in Diplomacy, Bachelor of Science in History

Graduation Year: 2021

Ashley Valanzola earned her undergraduate degree in History from the United States Naval Academy in 2010. After completing her studies, she received a commission as a Naval Officer and deployed to Southeast Asia, Somalia, and South America. Her last tour of duty was at the Pentagon where she served as the aide for Admiral Todd Squire, Director of International Engagement for the U.S. Navy. During her time in the Navy, she completed a Masters of Arts in Diplomacy at Norwich University. Within the Diplomacy program, her focuses were conflict management, human rights law, and cultural property restitution. Ashley also served as a sexual assault victim advocate while in the Navy, and was nominated for Naval Base San Diego's victim advocate of the year award in 2013 and was runner-up for the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention Innovation Award in 2014. Currently, Ashley is in the History Ph.D. program at George Washington University. Her main field is modern European history, with an emphasis on the history of France, Holocaust studies, and cultural history.

Jonathan Zisook

City University of New York – Graduate Center

Degree: Ph.D.

Field: Sociology

Previous Degrees: Master of Arts in Modern Jewish History, Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

Graduation Year: 2020

Jonathan (Yoni) Zisook is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), where he specializes in the sociology of religion and contemporary Jewry. His dissertation will focus on the politics of Holocaust and Jewish memory in contemporary Poland from a comparative-historical perspective. He has forthcoming publications in the *Journal of Classical Sociology*, *Religious Studies Review*, and the *Encyclopedia of Social Theory* (Wiley-Blackwell). Jonathan is a Graduate Teaching Fellow at CUNY Lehman College and he also teaches at Yeshiva University, where he previously completed a BA in Sociology and an MA in Modern Jewish History.

Faculty Fellows 2017

Babafemi Akinrinade

Bellingham, Washington

Western Washington University

Associate Professor

Babafemi Akinrinade, Associate Professor of Human Rights at Fairhaven College at Western Washington University holds LL.M. and J.S.D. degrees from the University of Notre Dame Law School, and LL.B. and LL.M. degrees from the Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. In addition, he holds a B.L. from the Nigerian Law School and is a member of the Nigerian Bar. Babafemi's teaching and research

focus on International Law, International and Regional Human Rights, Holocaust and Mass Atrocities, Transitional Justice and the Political and Socio-economic relations of African States. Previously, he taught in the University of Chicago's Human Rights Program and Center for International Studies and lectured in Law at the Faculty of Law at Obafemi Awolowo University. Babafemi was an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Sawyer Seminar on Comparative Truth and Reconciliation Processes at Northwestern University School of Law. Additionally, he has participated in the Jack and Anita Hess Faculty Seminar at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Holocaust Educational Foundation's Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization at Northwestern University. Babafemi has published his book, *Human Rights and State Collapse in Africa* (2009), with Eleven International Publishing.

Kurt Borchard

Kearney, Nebraska

University of Nebraska-Kearney

Professor of Sociology

Kurt Borchard, Ph.D., is Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He has taught a course on the Holocaust to undergraduates for more than ten years. He has been awarded fellowships to attend the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies Silberman Seminars at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Schusterman Center Summer Institute for Israel Studies at Brandeis University, the Holocaust Educational Foundation Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization at Northwestern University, and the Memorial Library Olga Lengyel Summer Institute in New York City. Kurt has twice won the University of Nebraska at Kearney Outstanding Teaching and Instructional Creativity Award. His other areas of interest include homelessness, criminology, and sociological theory. He has published two books, *Homeless in Las Vegas: Stories from the Street* (2011) and *The Word on the Street: Homeless Men in Las Vegas* (2005), with the University of Nevada Press.
