

**Dr Nils H. Roemer:
School of Humanities
University of Southampton**

n.roemer@soton.ac.uk

German Jewish Travelling Cultures in the Diaspora, 1919-1939

Background

This project is about tourism and travel writing in Jewish popular culture. Instead of centring Jewish cultures in the German nation state, it views Jewish tourism as an important element of dwelling in a trans-national context.

During the interwar period, Jewish communists, Zionist travellers and middle-class tourists recounted various destinations in their travel writings. Jewish newspapers and journals published regular travel reports about Berlin, London, New York and Paris, well as Crakow, the old Rhineland, Amsterdam, Alsace, Toledo and the remains of the old Ghettos in Prague, Rome and Venice. Nostalgic invocation of the Ghettos and encounters with the experiences of European metropolitan centres of modernity commingled. Moreover, travelling to Palestine, America and the Soviet Union brought travellers into contact with decisively different societies that encapsulated conflicting concepts and different options for Jews. Whereas the United States commonly stood for capitalism and liberalism, the Soviet Union promised to solve and overcome class, ethnic and religious differences in contrast to Zionists' aspirations in Palestine.

In addition to these three different destinations and visions, Europe provided a powerful Jewish historical landscape that offered many travellers the opportunity to negotiate the relationship between Jewish particularism and European universalism, as well the tension between change and continuity.