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Honors Thesis Abstracts

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SENIOR HONORS THESES:

Jacob (Cobi) Blumenfeld-Gantz

The Great Syrian Revolt of 1925: the Origins of the British-Druze Relationship and the Question of Syrian Nationalism

My thesis explores the role of British government officials in the 1925 Great Syrian Revolt and their interactions with the main instigators of the revolt, the Druze of Syria. I used primarily British and Druze government cables for my primary sources. In particular, I conducted research in English and Arabic in England (Kew National Archives) and Israel (the Central Zionist Archive and the Druze Archive). The paper begins by explaining the history and faith of the Druze people. The first chapter concludes by examining the interactions of the British and the Druze from the first substantial encounter in the 1830s to the eve of World War I. The second chapter discusses the period between World War I and the outbreak of the rebellion, with a focus on the development of Arab nationalism, the 1916 Arab Revolt, and broader British and French imperial interests in the region. The third chapter explores the dynamics between the British and the Druze during the 1925 revolt with specific attention on the British consul post in Syria.

Jacob Chefitz

The 1924 Anglo-American Treaty on Palestine: The British Perspective on America's Role in the Palestine Mandate, 1920-1924

This thesis is a study of the making of the 1924 Anglo-American Treaty on Palestine, in which the United States recognized the British Mandate of Palestine, and Great Britain guaranteed the Americans specific rights and privileges on par with other

members of the League of Nations (remember that the United States Senate had voted against joining the League). While other scholars have analyzed the Treaty in the past, this thesis attempts to offer a fresh perspective by analyzing the crafting of the document through the lens of the British Foreign Service. Using documents from the archives of the British Foreign Office, Colonial Office, and Cabinet—as well as some private papers—this thesis attempts to chronicle the sequence of events that spurred the Foreign Office to sign the Treaty. It argues as follows: the Anglo-American Treaty on Palestine emerged not out of legal necessity, but from the circumstances surrounding broader Anglo-American negotiations—which the Foreign Office initially wanted to avoid—over America’s role in the new, evolving international order, particularly with regard to the League of Nations Mandate system. For the British Foreign and Colonial Offices, the Treaty was an attempt to fortify the local Mandate government in the face of Arab opposition by eliminating American threats to the integrity and credibility of the British administration as a local sovereign and as an instrument of the League of Nations Mandate system. Contrary to what some might assume, the Treaty was less about American approval of Zionism and more about Great Britain’s conception of a new, evolving international order and America’s place in it. What emerges is a more complicated picture of how the British Foreign Office, through the Palestine Mandate, tried to navigate and balance a number of competing issues: a commitment to the Balfour Declaration in the face of ever-increasing Arab protests, the maintenance of a healthy Anglo-American relationship when factors such as naval disarmament and the repayment of war debts threatened to disrupt it, and the strengthening of the League of Nations’ institutions, legal instruments, and ideals.

Alicia DeMaio

“All the Success Which Could Be Expected.” Contemporary Responses to

the Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1803-1817

Contrary to what other historians have argued, the American public did not perceive the Lewis and Clark expedition as a failure whose goals they did not understand. Instead, the explorers' contemporaries—as represented by newspaper editors, the literary elite, scientists, and politicians—viewed the venture as important for the future prosperity of America in a multitude of ways. By examining the texts these groups of people produced—articles, reviews of books written by the expedition members, scientific texts, congressional debates, satirical works, and letters, among others—a discourse responding to Lewis and Clark's journey can be created. This discourse reveals that each of these groups used the Lewis and Clark expedition and the benefits it provided to comprehend the rapidly expanding United States and to understand the West as an American space united with the eastern states.

Arielle Kay Herzberg

Ignaz Zollschan: An Insider's View of Early Twentieth Century Racial Science and Zionism

This thesis analyzes the works of Ignaz Zollschan, a Jewish scientist who lived in Vienna, Carlsbad, and London in the early-twentieth century. While throughout his life Zollschan consistently showed his fundamental concern for the survival of the Jewish people, his ideas on racial science and Zionism evolved. I argue that although he initially accepted standard definitions of race and believed in a superior Jewish race, over time he came to reject strict racial categories and gave up on the idea of a racial hierarchy. I thus divide my thesis into three sections, asking three fundamental questions. How did Zollschan's environment contribute to his racial scientific and Zionist theories? What exactly were his racial scientific theories and how did they

change? What were Zollschan's views on Zionism and how did they develop over time? The way in which Zollschan adjusted his theories reflect his context and show the influences of anti-Semitic authors, Jewish scientists, Zionist figures, and British academics at various points throughout his life. Ultimately, Zollschan's story reveals prominent early-twentieth century ideas of science, race, and culture, and therefore goes beyond the biographical study of a single individual.

Ben Kripke

A Short-Lived "Brotherhood": The Construction and Destruction of a Colonial-Native Friendship in Early Pennsylvania

When founding the colony of Pennsylvania, William Penn sought to create a lasting friendship and "brotherhood" with the local Native Americans in accordance with his liberal Quaker values and vision of a religious Quaker utopia in which colonists and natives would live side-by-side in harmony. However, James Logan and Penn's sons, John, Thomas, and Richard Penn, who largely conducted colonial-native diplomacy in the colony in the early-eighteenth century, willingly deviated from Penn's peaceful policies in order to benefit the colony financially. This thesis constructs a narrative that elucidates the transformation of colonial-native relations in Pennsylvania between Pennsylvania's establishment in 1681 and the Walking Purchase of 1737, in which Pennsylvania's leaders unduly stripped the local natives of over 1,000 square miles of their land. By surveying the diplomatic policies of William Penn, James Logan, and Penn's sons, this thesis explores the transformation of relations from mutually beneficial to dysfunctional.

Max Levy

"Shmuel Alexandrov and the Making of a Modern Russian Jewish Philosophy"

This thesis explores the life and thought of Rabbi Shmuel Alexandrov (1865-1941), a traditional Russian Jewish rabbi who was heavily influenced by Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), Hasidism, the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment), early Zionism, German Idealism, and Russian philosophy. Although Alexandrov never held an influential rabbinical position, he developed and articulated a unique, and at times radical, ideology over many decades of prolific essay writing and correspondence with leading Jewish intellectuals, including Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook, Ahad Ha'am, Micha Josef Berdyczewski, and Yehuda Leib Maimon. In his efforts to revitalize Russian Jewry from what he perceived as its spiritual and religious depravity, Alexandrov sought to formulate a modern approach to Judaism that would be intellectually compelling to twentieth-century Jews. Until recently, scholars have largely neglected Russian Jewish intellectual history. Even as historians have begun to explore the unique character of the Russian Haskalah, nearly no attention has been paid to the contributions that Eastern Europe made towards the development of modern Jewish thought. By examining Alexandrov's philosophy of Judaism, this thesis demonstrates that Russian Jewish philosophy deserves greater attention from contemporary Jewish intellectual historians.

Laurel J. Ma

From Workers' Struggles to Opposition Politics: The Social Movement for Democracy in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe (1980-2006)

While existing historiography portrays 1998 as the beginning of a dark epoch known as 'The Zimbabwean Crisis,' it was actually the peak of a vibrant social movement that had made tremendous strides in democratization. This movement, which is underemphasized and often dismissed as a series of chaotic strikes, originated in the labor movement and grew to incorporate

civil society, eventually leading to the formation of a strong opposition party that was the first to pose a legitimate threat to the ruling party, the Zimbabwean African National Union – Patriotic Front in over a decade. In this thesis, I attempted to answer the following questions: What were the origins of this popular struggle? How did it evolve into the Movement for Democratic Change? What light does it shed on the eventual fragmentation of the MDC? And most importantly, what does it illuminate about the nature of social movements in post-colonial Africa?

By examining Zimbabwean newspapers and political manifestos, speeches, and interviews of prominent leaders in the MDC, the ZANU-PF, and the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions, I argue that the ZCTU played a vital role in creating a popular movement for democracy in post-colonial Zimbabwe by providing an alternative voice to the ZANU-PF that eventually manifested as a powerful political party. However, in part because of its multi-racial, multi-class, and multi-ethnic character, the MDC soon became divided by competing interests and failed to develop a coherent ideology, ultimately alienating the workers who built its very foundations. While diverse citizens of Zimbabwe were able to compromise and coalesce temporarily to challenge the Mugabe regime under the vague slogan of “change,” in a climate of increased government violence and repression, tensions arose and self-interests became paramount. Though the movement ultimately failed to unseat Mugabe and the ZANU-PF, this case study reveals that social movements are not monolithic and changeless, but rather complex, contradictory and contested, limited by their own hierarchies and inequalities. Despite claiming to be the party of “the people,” the MDC was a site of heterogeneous forces continuously interacting sometimes in harmony but other times in opposition, influenced by their individual origins, ideologies, and financial sponsors. Indeed,

democratic change, just as any other social transformation, does not occur in a vacuum but is simultaneously propelled and inhibited by existing structures.

Adin Pearl

Shalom y Salud: Perspectives on Jewish Identity in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

Soon after General Franco's forces with the support of Hitler and Mussolini rebelled against the Spanish Republic in July 1936, the American Communist Party, under direction from Moscow, recruited volunteers to fight against Franco, whom the Communist Party considered part of an international fascist threat. Dubbed the "Abraham Lincoln Brigade," nearly three thousand Americans fought against the Francoist rebels, while approximately half of those volunteers were young Jewish immigrants or children of Jewish immigrants.

While Jewish-American resistance to fascist aggression in the 1930s could have been used to challenge the later-developed historical narrative of Jewish passivity before and during the Holocaust, contemporary sources from the time of recruitment show that most of the Jewish volunteers viewed their participation in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade through an internationalist worldview that largely ignored any notion of national Jewish identity. Therefore, it would have been misleading to consider them an example of specifically Jewish national resistance to fascism and Hitlerism. Nevertheless, as time passed after the end of World War II, many Jewish veterans of the Lincoln Brigade began to reconsider their notions of Jewish identity. By investigating how these perspectives were informed by post-World War II communal, national, and international developments, this thesis evaluates the evolution in Jewish identity that occurred throughout the greater Jewish political Left. Additionally, this

thesis will show the impact of anachronism on generating historical narrative.

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Verónica Patricia Casellas

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