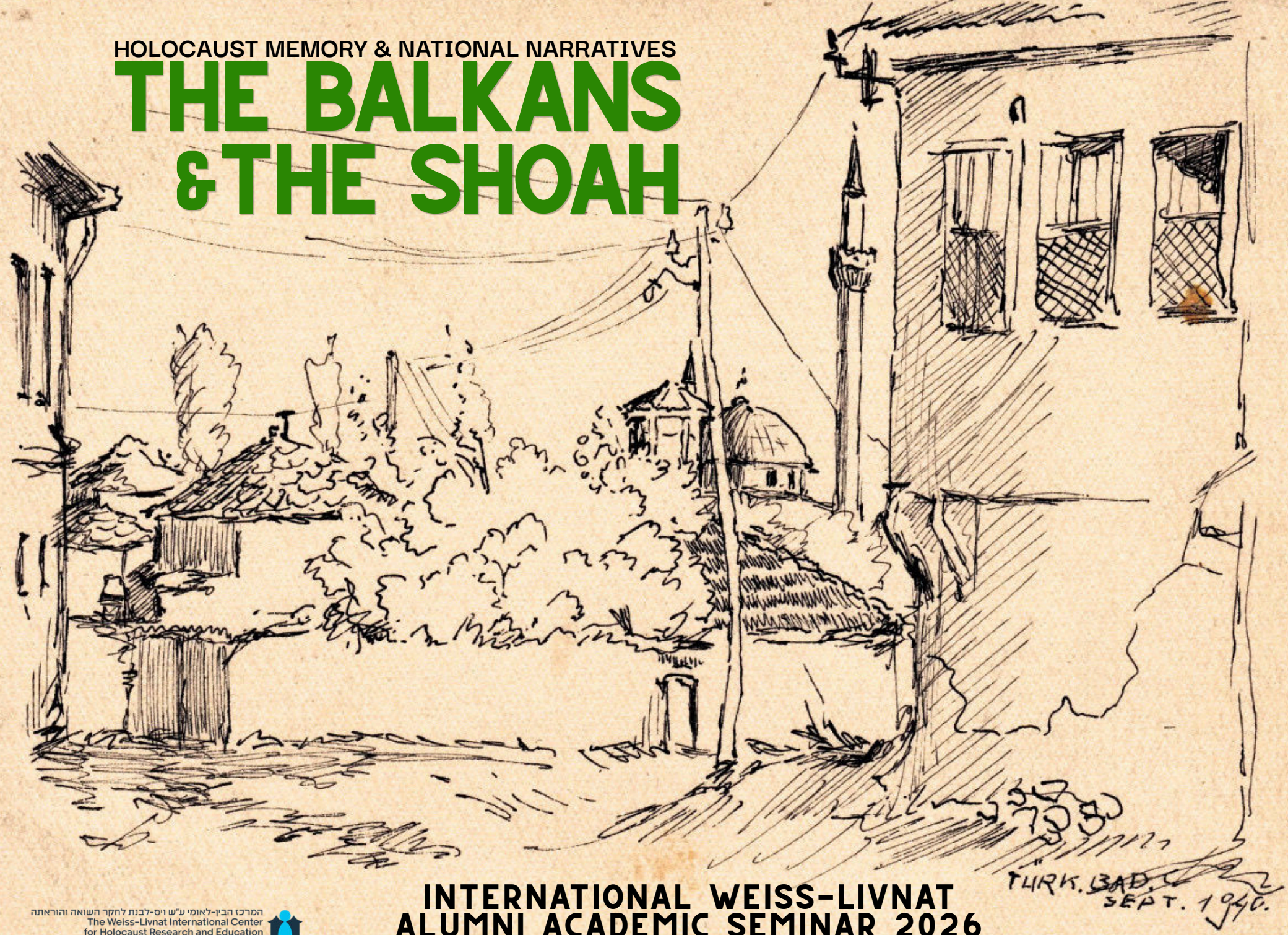
HOLOCAUST MEMORY & NATIONAL NARRATIVES

THE BALKANS & THE SHOAH



Ink on paper: "Turkish Bath," Gaston Gamliel (1923-1940), 1940

INTERNATIONAL WEISS-LIVNAT ALUMNI ACADEMIC SEMINAR 2026

SEPTEMBER 2-9, 2026

המרכז הבין-לאומי ע"ש ויס-לבנת לחקר השואה והוראתה
The Weiss-Livnat International Center for Holocaust Research and Education
مركز الدولي فايس-ليبنات لأبحاث الهولوكوست وتعليمه
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA אוניברסיטת חיפה

Holocaust memory is never simply preserved, it is produced. Oftentimes governments decide which wartime histories get monuments and which get silence; national narratives absorb occupation and collaboration into stories of heroic resistance; and where Jewish communities were destroyed outright, what remains to be commemorated is often just an absence, shaped by whoever controls the telling. Alumni of the Weiss-Livnat program meet versions of this dynamic in their own countries, usually alone. The Alumni Academic Seminars bring them together as colleagues and academic contemporaries, giving them room to discuss, evaluate, and confront these patterns as a group—work that's difficult to do well alone.

The 2026 seminar, "The Balkans and the Shoah: Holocaust Memory and National Narratives," uses Southeast Europe as its case study. Over 8 days in Thessaloniki, Bitola, and Skopje (September 2–9, 2026), participants examine how Ottoman collapse, Axis occupation, and post-1945 nation-building each shaped how the Holocaust is remembered, minimized, or omitted today. Rather than a country-by-country survey, the program follows three throughlines: how national myths of resistance and victimhood obscure a state's role in its own Jewish population's destruction; how commemoration works, or fails to, once a community is erased and living memory runs out; and how these Balkan patterns—collaboration minimization, competitive victimhood, strategic amnesia—recur elsewhere, including in participants' own countries. Site visits, survivor testimony, expert lectures, and workshops are built around that last point.

Because the group is international, the week doubles as a comparative exercise: participants test their own countries' unresolved memory politics against what they see on the ground, and leave with sharper tools and a wider network for the work waiting at home.

DAY 1 WEDNESDAY 02.09 Thessaloniki

15:00	**Arrival & Check-In** Anatolia Hotel
16:00	**Introductions & Itinerary** Zeus is Loose
17:00-19:00	**Testimony** Hella Kounio (daughter of survivors)
19:00	**Alumni Dinner**

DAY 2 THURSDAY 03.09 Thessaloniki

09:00-10:30	**History of the Greek Jewish Community**
10:30-13:00	**Tour of Jewish Heritage Sites** with Prof. Giorgos Antoniou
13:00-14:00	**Catered Lunch** Zeus is Loose
14:00-15:30	**"Beyond October 7: Antisemitism, Competing Victimhoods & Holocaust Distortion in Greece"** Prof. Giorgos Antoniou
15:30-16:30	**History, Academia, & Education** Elona Gjata, Angela Ballas, Daria Ruth Kubrina, Shannon Quigley
16:30-16:45	**Coffee Break**
16:45-18:00	**Challenges & Insights #1**
18:00-19:00	**Media & the Digital Sphere** Yoav Yaron, Samantha Rodriguez, Andreea Stanca, Lekë Rezniqi
19:00	**Free Time for Dinner**

DAY 3 FRIDAY 04.09 Thessaloniki→Bitola

08:00 **Hotel Checkout & Store Luggage**
Anatolia Hotel

08:30-09:30 **Stolpersteine at the Port**
Platía Eleftherías / Liberty Square

09:45-12:30 **Tour of Monastiroton Synagogue & the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki**

12:30-14:00 **Free Time for Lunch**

14:30 **Gather at Hotel for Departure**
Anatolia Hotel

~18:00 **Arrive in Bitola / Hotel Check-In**
Pionerski Hotel

19:00 **Shabbat Dinner**
Pionerski Hotel



Graphite on paper: "N/I" Gaston Gamliel (1923-1940), N/I

DAY 4 SATURDAY 05.09 Bitola

08:30-10:00 **Tour - The Lives of Dr. Haim Abravanel & Estreya Haim Ovadya**
with Dr. Rachel Levy Drummer

10:00-11:30 **Visit to the State Archive**
with Goce Stojanovski

11:30-13:30 **Jewish Heritage Tour**
with Zoran Gjorgiev

13:30-14:30 **Catered Lunch**
Pionerski Hotel

14:30-15:30 **"Teaching the Holocaust in Macedonia: Curriculum and Extracurricular Approaches"**
Ilo Trajkovski

15:30-16:30 **Art & Representation**
Beverley Price, Rebecca Frank, Lindsay Shapiro, Daniel Toro Torres

16:30-16:45 **Coffee Break**

16:45-17:45 **Challenges & Insights #2**
Yoav Yaron

18:00-19:30 **"Amanet": The Artistic Legacy of Gaston Gamliel**
with special guests, the Nashoku Family, custodians of Gamliel's artwork

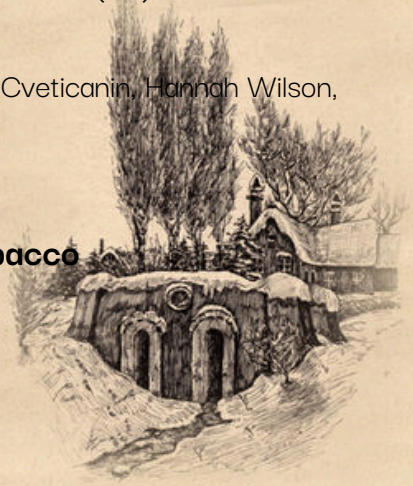
19:30 **Free Time for Dinner**

DAY 5 SUNDAY 06.09 Bitola→Skopje

07:30	**Hotel Checkout (after breakfast & lunch packs!)** Pionerski Hotel
07:30-08:30	**March of Life** route Jews took to the railway station for deportation
08:30-09:30	**Visit to Jewish Cemetery**
09:30	**Depart for Stobi Archaelogical Site**
~11:00	**Tour of Stobi Archaelogical Site**
~12:30	**Depart for Skopje & Lunch on the Road**
13:15	**Drop luggage at hotel** Marriott Hotel
13:30-15:00	**Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia** Visit with Prof. Dr. Ivanka Vasilevska, President of the Committee of Education in Parliament
15:15-15:30	**Coffee Break**
15:30-17:00	**"Macedonian Jews & the Jewish Community"** Mr. Pepo Levi, President of the Macedonian Jewish community, with Dr. Rachel Levy Drummer & MA Maja Susha-Temelkova
17:00-19:00	**Film - "The Third Half"** 2012, Director Darko Mitrevski
19:30	**Free Time for Dinner**

DAY 6 MONDAY 07.09 Skopje→Thessaloniki

08:30	**Welcome Speech** Prof. Dr. Mitko Panov, Director of the Institute of National History
09:00	**"Rescue & Survival in Wartime Bitola: The Story of Rahela Nahmias & Xhafer Belegu"** Prof. Dr. Skender Asani & MA Maja Susha-Temelkova
10:00-10:45	**"Contemporary North Macedonia – Education, Social Challenges, and Combatting Antisemitism"** with Prof. Dr. Ivanka Vasilevska
10:45-11:00	**Coffee Break**
11:00-12:20	**"The (Non) Memory Politics of the Balkan Wars: Crimes Against Women in Armed Conflicts as a Case Study"** Prof. Dr. Karolina Ristova-Aasterud, University of SS. Cyril and Methodius (Macedonia) & Honorary Visiting Scholar at the University of Aberdeen School of Law (UK).
12:20-13:30	**Politics, Law & the State** Deborah Coopersmith, Jovana Cveticanin, Hannah Wilson, Larissa-Mariel Lömpel
13:30-14:30	**Lunch**
14:45	**Checkout & Monopol Tobacco Factory**
~16:00	**Depart for Thessaloniki**
~20:00	**Check-In** Modern Luxury Hotel
20:30	**Free Time for Dinner**



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DAY 7 TUESDAY 08.09 Thessaloniki

08:30-09:30 **Community & Everyday Life**
Emma Hauf, Shifra Waxman, Luisa Giese, Judy Goldberg

9:45-11:15 **A Survivor's Testimony**
Mrs. Rina Revah

11:15-12:00 **Contemporary Greek Jewish Life**
Jacko Levi, member of the Thessaloniki Jewish community

12:00-13:00 **Catered Lunch**
Zeus is Loose

13:00-14:00 **"Skeletons in the Closet of Aristotle University"**
Mr. Iosef Vaena

14:00-15:15 **"'The Promise': Testimony & Memory in a Graphic Novel Metanarrative"**
Dr. Evlampia Tsireli

15:15-15:30 **Coffee Break**

15:30-17:00 **Challenges & Insights #3**

17:00-18:30 **Closing Remarks & Reflections**

19:00 **Let's Paint the Town Red!**
optional, off-program ~ pay your own way

DAY 8 WEDNESDAY 09.09

~11:00 **Checkout**
Modern Luxury Hotel

List of Hotels & Addresses:
Anatolia Hotel: 13 Langada Street, Thessaloniki, 546 29
Pionerski Hotel: Rooseveltova 20, 7000, Bitola
Marriott Hotel: Ploshtad Makedonija 7, Skopje, 1000, North Macedonia
Modern Luxury Hotel: Egnatia 41, Thessaloniki, 546 30



Watercolor on paper: "N/I" Gaston Gamliel (1923-1940), N/I