

The conference seeks to revisit the legacy of banned books and state censorship from the Cold War to the present in the East European context. It aims to spotlight clandestine circulation, publication, and reception of banned books in the past and their resonance today, when creative expression is again under threat due to political upheavals, wars, migration crises, and the resulting cultural exterritoriality. The purpose of the conference is to situate these processes comparatively, across various geopolitical contexts and genres, with a focus on Eastern Europe. World-leading specialists from different disciplines (historians, literary scholars, librarians, archivists, journalists, publishers, and writers) will explore banned books and exterritorial publishing from a theoretical, comparative, and historical perspectives, e.g., the covert publications and circulation of Orwell's novels behind the Iron Curtain, war narratives that violate state doctrines from WWII to the present, banned books in the Internet era, East European diasporas and literary institutions.

The conference is sponsored by the [CUNY Academy for the Humanities and Sciences](#) and co-hosted by [Tamizdat Project](#), a public scholarship initiative for the study of banned books from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

International Conference

Banned Books from the Cold War to the Present



Speakers

Polina Barskova Sorin Cucu Gennady Estraiikh Alexander Gavrilov
 Nicole Gonik Diana Gor Linor Goralik Irena Grudzinska-Gross
 Thomas Keenan Ksenya Kiebusinski Yasha Klots Evgeny Kogan
 Ivan Kolpakov Elena Kostyuchenko Mark Lipovetsky Viktor Martinovich
 Ainsley Morse Kit Moszynski Petr Orsag Maxim Osipov
 Eugene Ostashevsky Ellendea Proffer Polina Sadovskaya Ilaria Sicari
 Roman Utkin Monika Zaleska

10 | 11 CUNY Graduate Center
 Skylight Room (9100)
 May 2024 Free and open to the
 public, with a photo ID



MAY 10

- 10:00 — 10:30 am
Opening Remarks
Yasha Klots (Hunter College CUNY and Tamizdat Project)
Polina Sadovskaya (PEN America)
- 10:30 am — 12:00 pm
Banned Books across Genres and History (moderated by Sarah Danielsson)
Polina Barskova (University of California, Berkeley)
“My Hero is the Truth’: Forbidden War Memories of Nikolai Nikulin”
Gennady Estraikh (New York University)
“The Soviet Jewish Tamizdat”
Diana Gor (Shevchenko Scientific Society and Tamizdat Project)
“The Contraband Ukrainian Translation of Orwell’s *Animal Farm*”

LUNCH

- 1:00 — 2:30 pm
Banned Books in Theory and Practice (moderated by Yasha Klots)
Petr Orsag (Palacký University Olomouc)
“Cooperation or Competition? Czechoslovak Publishers in Exile after August 1968”
Sorin Cucu (CUNY Graduate Center and LaGuardia Community College)
“Cold War Literature, the Art of Persecution?”
Mark Lipovetsky (Columbia University)
“Abram Tertz as Michel Foucault”
- 3:00 — 4:30 pm
Polish Banned Books and Literary Institutions (moderated by Irena Grudzinska-Gross)
Monika Zaleska (CUNY Graduate Center)
“I Decided to Fight for It’: Józef Czapski’s Struggle for *Kultura*”
Ilaria Sicari (Ca’ Foscari University of Venice – Stanford)
“Transnational Networks of Polish Tamizdat”
Kit Moszynski (Hunter College CUNY and Tamizdat Project)
“Fathers and Fatherlands: Gombrowicz’s *The Possessed* as a Precursor to *Trans-Atlantyk*”
- 5:00 — 6:00 pm
Banned Books in Libraries and Archives (moderated by Diana Gor)
Ksenya Kiebuszinski (University of Toronto Libraries)
“Defiance in the Library Stacks: Collecting and Promoting Intellectually Brave Books”
Thomas Keenan (Princeton University Library)
“The Tamizdat Manuscript Legacy at Princeton University Library”

MAY 11

- 10:00 — 11:30 am
Banned Books from (before) the Cold War to the Present (moderated by Mark Lipovetsky)
Nicole Gonik (University of California, Berkeley, and Tamizdat Project)
“‘Manuscripts Don’t Burn’: How Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita* Wrote Its Own Publishing History”
Viktor Martinovich (European Humanities University)
“How to Ban a Book in the Internet Era: Reflections from Belarus”
Roman Utkin (Wesleyan University)
“Queerography: Mapping Sites of Desire Across Borders”
- 12:00 — 1:00 pm
Keynote: Elena Kostyuchenko

LUNCH

- 2:00 — 3:30 pm
Banned Books Today: A Round Table Discussion with Publishers (moderated by Yasha Klots)
Alexander Gavrilov (Vidim Books) online
Linor Goralik (ROAR) online
Evgeny Kogan (Babel Books)
Ivan Kolpakov (Meduza)
Maxim Osipov (The Fifth Wave) online
- 4:00 — 5:30 pm
Poetry and Translation Reading
Polina Barskova
Linor Goralik
Viktor Martinovich
Ainsley Morse
Eugene Ostashevsky
- 6:30 — 9:00 pm
Rock. Paper. Scissors (2023 | Dir. Anton Zhelnov and Anna Narinskaya)
Film screening and conversation with Ellendea Proffer, co-founder of Ardis Publishers, and Anna Narinskaya
Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall