



The Department of Russian and Slavic Studies (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
invites you to the guest lecture:

“World Literature and Intellectual Autonomy in the Early Soviet Period: People and Institutions”

by **PETR BUDRIN (Harvard University)**

Thursday, December 2, 2021, 18:30 Jerusalem | 11:30 New York | 17:30 Paris | 19:30 Moscow

ZOOM: <https://huji.zoom.us/j/86702115258?pwd=M0RpbmlzeGV6Y3ZIYnB0bjlvWk1hZz09>

Meeting ID: 867 0211 5258 | Passcode: 724316

Throughout the 1930s and until his death from starvation in 1942 during the siege of Leningrad, Adrian Frankovskii occupied a single room in a large communal apartment shared by several families. His furnishings were limited to the bare necessities: a sofa, a pair of chairs, a bookcase, and an old standing desk. It was at this desk that Frankovskii created his monumental translations of classic works of literature, including several volumes of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. Frankovskii was a thinker versed in religious philosophy, classical philology, and psychology who taught at Petrograd University before the Bolshevik coup. His gradual retreat into the intellectual ivory tower in the years after the revolution was a deliberate strategy on Frankovskii's part: as a non-Marxist intellectual, he wanted to preserve his intellectual independence in the face of the intrusive ideological reality.



A. Frankovskii. Collage by an unknown author.
Credit: Maria Baskina, The Institute of Russian Literature in St Petersburg ('The Pushkin House')

The case of Frankovskii is a vivid example of how, as the era of the Great Terror approached, fictional worlds from past centuries and foreign cultures became increasingly attractive to highly educated individuals who were gradually pushed out of official spheres of cultural production. Based on archival materials, this lecture will reconstruct the subjective experiences of a group of translators and literary critics who, each in their own way, engaged with classic works of world literature in the 1930s. In doing so, the lecture will examine the relationship between repression and the dissemination of literature and raise general questions about reading and studying literature under ideological pressure. The Soviet project of world literature was primarily a political enterprise. However, for marginalized groups of intellectuals, it offered more than just a way to earn a living: it provided a sense of purpose and identity, a space of intellectual and imaginative autonomy.



PETR BUDRIN is Postdoctoral Fellow at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University. His current research focuses on the history of institutions that functioned as zones of intellectual autonomy in Soviet Russia. He completed his doctorate at Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford, where he was supported by a Clarendon Scholarship. His upcoming monograph explores the Soviet reception of the eighteenth-century British writer Laurence Sterne.