

January 2009

Russian State Humanities University

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***1943: Crossing the Jew-Zone***

**Final Exam**

Answer **all** of the following 4 questions. Each question is worth 25% of the grade. You may write in English, Yiddish, or Hebrew.

1. The role of culture in the Nazi ghettos. What was the role of cultural activity in the Warsaw and Vilna ghettos? Make reference to the following:
  - A. The celebration of 100,000 books as discussed by Kruk and Zemakh Feldstein
  - B. The role of Yiddish song and Yiddish theatre
  - C. The activities of the Zionist youth movements
  - D. The career of Yitshak Katzenelson
2. The response of Soviet Jewry. Choose any three of the following Soviet-Jewish authors whose wartime writings we have studied: Dovid Bergelson, Shmuel Halkin, Itsik Feffer, Ilya Ehrenburg, and Peretz Markish. Explain how their writing goes beyond mere propaganda. Explain how they responded in a new way to the fate of European Jewry.
3. Beyond analogy. Those few writers who survived the Great Deportation looked back upon a catastrophe without analogy, without any known precedent. How did Perle, Katzenelson, and Auerbach express their sense of the unprecedented? What was the one part of the catastrophe that stood for the whole? Bring specific examples from the writing of each author.
4. All of Avrom Sutzkever's wartime poetry carries a specific date. Discuss at least three of his poems as documentary evidence of the fate of Vilna Jewry. Finally, explain how you are able to extract the historical truth from the poetic form.