

Dr. Anna Simonova

Born in Moscow, Dr. Anna Simonova specializes in public diplomacy in the Middle East, cross-cultural dialogue, and the history of the Zionist movement in Russia during the 1920s–1930s.

She completed her PhD on History at Moscow State University of Service. Research "Zionist movement in Soviet Russia". B.A. and M.A. in Russian History and Archival Studies at the Russian State University for the Humanities. She also participated in a joint academic program in History and Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, established in cooperation between the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (New York) and the Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow). In addition, she held a Ph.D. fellowship at University College London (UCL) and pursued advanced Hebrew language studies at the Rothberg International School of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Professional Experience

Dr. Simonova's work integrates academic research with documentary and narrative filmmaking, program leadership, and public-facing educational initiatives. She has served as an academic adviser on philanthropic strategy and fundraising; directed Diplomatic and Multicultural Seminars for the Russian Friends of the Hebrew University (RFHU) at the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace; and held the position of Executive Director of RFHU. She has also served as an adviser to the Jewish Heritage Society in partnership with Brandeis University and major Russian archival institutions, contributing to investigations of archival materials displaced during World War II from Central and Eastern Europe—including Liechtenstein—as well as to research on the historical development of Jewish communities across Europe.

Current Research

"The Crossroads of Cultures: Bukharan Jews and Lyuli/ Jugi in Uzbekistan During the Soviet and Post-Soviet Periods: Neighbours of Yesteryear"

Dr. Simonova's current research explores the memories and narratives of the Lyuli/ Jugi (Central Asian Roma) regarding their everyday life alongside Bukharan Jews in Uzbekistan during the Soviet and Post-Soviet eras. The study examines the social and cultural interactions between these communities—including shared language practices, music, crafts, and daily customs—and traces the transformation or disappearance of these traditions over time. It also considers the gradual relocation of the Jugi into neighborhoods formerly inhabited by Bukharan Jews.

Methodologically, the project employs oral history through structured interviews and questionnaires, complemented by archival and library research conducted in Uzbekistan and Israel. The findings will form the basis of both a scholarly monograph and an accompanying documentary film.

