

## Raphael A. Halff

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### EDUCATION

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**Harvard University** Cambridge, MA  
Ph.D. in Comparative Literature Expected 2028

**Tel Aviv University** Tel Aviv, Israel  
M.A. in Yiddish Literature, *Summa Cum Laude* August 2022  
*Thesis Title:* Fayner's Fire: The Making of a Destructivist  
*Thesis Advisors:* Dr. Hannah Pollin-Galay, Prof. David Roskies

**Columbia University, School of General Studies** New York, NY  
B.A. in Computer Science February 2017

**Jewish Theological Seminary, Albert A. List College** New York, NY  
B.A. in Jewish Literature May 2017

### FOCUSED STUDIES

**YIVO: Yiddish—The Next Level** New York, NY  
Advanced course for those already teaching, researching or performing in Yiddish Summer 2021

**University of Wisconsin-Madison, Mayrent Institute for Yiddish Culture** Madison, Wisconsin  
A Mayrent Graduate Seminar on the theme of "The Yiddish Object" May 2–3, 2021

**Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program** Tel Aviv, Israel  
Program in Yiddish Language and Literature Summer 2019

**World Jewish Congress, International Yiddish Center** Vilnius, Lithuania  
Seminar on Yiddish language and culture in partnership with the Israel National Authority for Yiddish June 21–23, 2019

**Vilnius Yiddish Institute, Summer Program** Vilnius, Lithuania  
Program in Yiddish Language and Literature Summer 2015

**Yiddish Book Center** Amherst, MA  
The Steiner Summer Program in Yiddish Language and Culture Summer 2014

### RELEVANT WORK

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**Jewish Theological Seminary, Prof. David Roskies** New York, NY  
*Research Assistant* Jan 2021–Present

- Originate and curate a first-of-its-kind [digital archive](#) of literary and pedagogic resources, academic texts, and documents concerning institutional history, collected from the personal archives of Professor David Roskies

**Jewish Historical Institute, Ringelblum Archive** Warsaw, Poland  
*Contributing Translator* July, 2020–Present

- Translates Yiddish manuscripts into English from the underground archive of the Warsaw Ghetto

**[The Online Treasury of Yiddish Poetry](#)** New York, NY  
*Founder and Director* Sept 2018–Present

- Develop a website to exhibit Yiddish verse and prose, embedded in a Talmud-like page of digital commentary, with lexicographic analysis tools

## Joliciel Informatique

Programmer

Tel Aviv / NY  
June 2019–June 2020

- Under the supervision of Assaf Urieli of Joliciel Informatique and Valentina Fedchenko of Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, as part of the [LJTRAD project](#), write programs for building a Yiddish-French text corpus, which consists of the following stages: OCR, conversion to YIVO orthography, conversion to TEI format, bilingual alignment, backend search functionality and a user interface

## Tel Aviv University, Prof. Hannah Pollin-Galay

Research Assistant

Tel Aviv, Israel  
Nov 2019–April 2020

- Digitized, transcribed, and summarized handwritten and typewritten manuscripts
- Created annotated digital finding aids for uncatalogued archives

## Haifa University, Prof. Sinai Rusinek

Programmer and Transcriber

Haifa, Israel  
Feb–Aug 2019

- As part of [large digital humanities project](#), developed automated processes for the digitization and optical character recognition of newspaper collections
- Corrected the Yiddish texts output by these processes

## Yiddish Book Center

Fellow

Amherst, MA  
Sept 2017–Aug 2018

- Developed templates for code-lessly making [Yiddish language-learning computer games](#)
- Wrote finding aids and articles for and about the Yiddish Book Center collections

## PUBLICATIONS

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### ARTICLES

#### *Peer-Reviewed:*

**Hear, O, Felye! The Quiet Pains That Talk in H. D. Nomborg's "Shvayg, shvester!"**  
*In Geveb*. Invited to resubmit.

#### *Published Scholarship:*

**Adventures of a Bad Researcher: The Mystery of the Last Yiddish Linotype**  
[Yiddish Book Center](#), 2018.

**770 Eastern Parkway**

[Mapping Yiddish New York](#), May 12, 2016.

### TRANSLATIONS AND REVIEWS

**Review of *Sutzkever Essential Prose*, translated by Zackary Sholem Berger**  
[In Geveb](#), June 23, 2021.

**A Problem, by Joseph Opatoshu, translated by Zeke Levine and Raphael Halff**  
[In Geveb](#), July 1, 2019.

**We Travel, by Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman, translated by Cooper, Halff, Levine, and Sperling**  
[PaknTreger](#), 2018.

### FICTION AND EXPERIMENTAL

**Di letstse yidishe bekeray [The last Yiddish bakery]**  
*Naye Levone*, forthcoming.

#### **Idioms in Translation**

[Bad Quarto](#), February 2023.

#### **A briv der post [A letter to the post office]**

[Forverts](#), October 10, 2019 [Yiddish]; reprinted in *Hert a mayse: antolye [Hear a story: anthology]*, edited by Dov-Ber Kerler et al., Olniansky Tekst, 2020, pp. 15–21; and *Yidishland*, vol. 6–7, Oct. 2020.

**A srayfe in bruklin: A dankbriv di murashkes [A fire in a Brooklyn: A thank-you letter to the ants]**  
*Forverts*, April 2019.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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**Fayner's Fire: The Making of a Destructivist** Dec 21, 2021  
Talk at the Association for Jewish Studies 53rd Annual Conference, Chicago.

**"Struggle Must Make a Noise," Guest Lecture on Ka-Tzetnik's Postwar Evolution** April 12, 2021  
For a Tel Aviv University literature course taught by Prof. Hannah Pollin-Galay: "Words and Violence: Holocaust Literature and the Problem of Language"

**"Aroyf un arop, nor tomid foroys": Yidishe poezye inem 21stn yorhundert [Up and down, but always onwards: Yiddish poetry in the 21st century—A poetry reading with Beruriah Wiegand]** Jan 11, 2021  
Respondent (in Yiddish). Event presented by The Goldreich Family Institute, Tel Aviv University.

## **AWARDS**

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**The Yiddish Book Center Translation Fellowship** 2021  
Awarded a \$5,000 grant translate an anthology of Yiddish literary manifestos of my own selection

**Knapp Family Foundation AJS Travel Grant** 2021

**Tel Aviv University, The Goldreich Family Institute AJS Travel Grant** 2021

**Naomi Praver Kadar Foundation Research Grant** 2021  
Grant of \$5,000 for the "Lerer Roskes Archive" (see *Relevant Work*)

**Tel Aviv University, The Goldreich Family Institute Scholarship** 2018–2020  
Full scholarship for Tel Aviv University Master's in Yiddish Literature

**Israel National Authority for Yiddish, Yiddish Short Story Contest** 2019  
Third prize for "A briv der post" [A letter to the post office]: 3,000 NIS

**Tel Aviv University, The Goldreich Family Institute Travel Grant** 2019  
Covered travel expenses for the WJC seminar on Yiddish studies held in Vilnius (see *Focused Studies*)

**Bina Appleman Memorial Education Award** 2017  
Albert A. List College, The Jewish Theological Seminary

## **TEACHING**

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**Boston Workers' Circle** Brookline, MA  
*Yiddish Instructor* Fall 2022  
• Taught Yiddish for beginners over Zoom

**Tel Aviv University** Tel Aviv  
*Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program, Teacher* Summer 2022  
• Taught Yiddish for beginners without a background in Hebrew

*Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program, Teaching Assistant* Summer 2021  
• Teaching assistant for the advanced students in the language class taught by Dr. Miriam Trinh and the literature seminar taught by Prof. David Roskies  
• Assigned and reviewed writing assignments and led discussion sections around the themes of the two courses

**Columbia University** New York, NY  
*Summer High School Program Assistant Teacher* June–Aug 2016

- Taught C-language programming to high school students with little to no programming experience
- Designed and graded quizzes and assignments, and assisted the students one-on-one

**International Rescue Committee** Brooklyn, NY  
*Refugee Youth Summer Academy Intern* July–Aug 2011

- Taught mathematics, English, music, and athletics to a multi-lingual group of elementary students

**Teaneck High School** Teaneck, NJ  
*Assistant Summer Teacher* Summer 2009

- Instructed middle school students needing remedial work

## **OTHER PURSUITS**

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**Chatham Fire Department, Ocean Company** Chatham, NY  
*Volunteer Firefighter* October 2020–Present

- BEFO certified, on academic leave since 2023

**Our Daily Bread** Chatham, NY  
*Baker and Vendor* Sept 2021–June 2022

- Worked in a team of four bakers producing hundreds of gluten-free loaves, bagels, and buns a day.
- Sold the bakeries regular and gluten-free products at the Glens Falls farmers' market

**Main St. Goodness / PieconicNY** Chatham, NY  
*Baker* Sept 2020–Jan 2021

- Produced the bakery's current staples: muffins, cookies, and dozens of kinds of pie and initiated a new regimen of croissants, breads, and select, often Vilna inspired, pastries

**United States Postal Service** Teaneck, NJ  
*City Carrier Assistant* March–August 2020

- Full-time letter carrier for the suburban town of Teaneck, NJ.

**Levain Bakery** New York, NY  
*Bread Baker* Feb–Aug 2017

- Produced the breads daily for two retail bakery locations as well as brioche, muffins, pizzas, bomboloncini, scones and sticky buns

**Brooklyn Botanical Garden** Brooklyn, NY  
*Discovery Garden Volunteer Docent* July 2016–Aug 2017

- Ran one of several fun and educational activity stations (on a rotating basis) for children ages two to fifteen and sensory-focused activities for children ages zero to five

**Intrusion Detection Systems Laboratory, Columbia University** New York, NY  
*Undergraduate Intern* Jan–Dec 2016

- Contributed to investigative project on websites that exploit vulnerabilities in anti-virus scanners

**Architectural Metal Fabricators, Inc.** New York, NY  
*Welding and Metallurgy Intern* Summer 2013

- Learned the art and science of welding from one of New York's finest custom metal and glass architectural project companies
- Contributed to the elaborate process of design, fabrication, and installation of custom projects

**Columbia University Players, Columbia University** New York, NY  
*CU Players Set Designer* Spring 2013

- Designed and built the set for a student-run theater production

## **LEADERSHIP**

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**Jewish Theological Seminary, Albert A. List College**

*Class President*

New York, NY

April 2014–Jan 2015

- Managed monthly class-wide events, and informed the student body of upcoming academic and non-academic opportunities

**Columbia University, General Studies**

*Student Council Relations Committee Member*

New York, NY

Fall 2013

- Improved communication, interaction, and relations between JTS and CU through active student council presence, student polling, and event planning

**LANGUAGES**

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	<b>Language</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Human:</b>	English	Native	27	
	Yiddish	Near native fluency	5	University courses, intensive summer programs, and regular academic and social use.
	French	Advanced	3	From having lived in France from 7 to 10 years old, and raised in a bilingual French-English family. Speaking is near native.
	Hebrew	Advanced	3	Advanced speaking, reading, and writing. Completed graduate courses in Hebrew.
	Russian	Elementary	1	1 year of formal Russian-language study.

**Machine:** C, C++, Java, Python, HTML, jQuery, JavaScript, PHP