



**Speaker: Niamh Hanrahan**

**Title:**

Unexpected Journeys: Tracing the Trajectories of Antonia Jacoby and Passengers of the Kasima Maru

**Abstract:**

The early 1940s saw thousands of Jews fleeing Europe for locations across the world, to escape Nazi persecution. One location was Japan. In Kobe, the city where most Jews came to, around 1,500 refugees had entered by 1941. Scholarship on the Jewish refugee experience in Japan is under-developed. Work which does exist pushes two main ideas: 1) that the journey Jews took to get to Japan was through Lithuania and the Soviet Union to Tsuruga and then by train to Kobe and 2) that Jewish onward mobility from Japan was to Shanghai, from where they would apply for entry to the US or Palestine.

This paper highlights two trajectories which complicate these concepts. Antonia Jacoby and her elderly mother came to Japan by travelling through Berlin, Moscow, Harbin and Busan. They then remained in Kobe until 1947. Their mobility across borders, and the length of time they remained in Kobe shows the variety of different refugee experiences. Passengers onboard the Kasima Maru in 1941 left Kobe and Yokohama to travel to Australia. A focus on this journey centres Jewish movement that stays within the Asia-Pacific region. This moves away from current approaches, which are dominated by trajectories of Jewish refugees re-entering spaces in the West. Using archival material and personal documentation, this paper will seek to demonstrate that there were vast scale of options and limitations that refugees faced at different points in their journeys in Japan, which need further exploration.

**Bio:**

Niamh Hanrahan is a second year PhD student at the University of Manchester in the UK, based in the Humanitarianism and Conflict Response Institute. Her PhD project is titled *Beyond Europe: Jewish Journeys and Humanitarian Aid in Japan (1931-1953)*, covering a transregional history of movement by Jewish refugees from Europe to Japan. She is especially interested in decentring the West within scholarship on the history of WWII Jewish migration, through exploring the refugee experiences of Jews in Japan. Niamh has published research in blogs for the academic website *Refugee History* and has a forthcoming article in *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*. She has been awarded international fellowships to conduct research in the USA, Germany and Japan and her current research in Japan is funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.