

Jessa Sinnott

B.A., Anthropology, University of California, Irvine, 2015

M.A., European and Mediterranean Studies, NYU, 2018

Jessa Sinnott, the Sidney and Rosalie Rose Fellow, is a recipient of the Czigler research award. She joined the Strassler Center in fall 2019 after completing an MA in European Studies at New York University. Sinnott's research focuses on anti-Jewish pogroms and neighborhood violence in Nazi occupied Poland. Specifically, she examines the motivations of perpetrators who committed acts of intimate violence, and the circumstances under which such acts became an imaginable reality. This research will serve as a framework in which to examine, holistically, the broader themes of interethnic relations in Poland, Polish antisemitism, and the national identity and culture that allowed for attitudes of indifference and violence in the face of Jewish suffering; demonstrating the ways in which anti-Jewish, neighborhood aggression fit into the totality of occupational violence.

During her MA training, Sinnott participated in the March of the Living to Auschwitz (Oświęcim, Poland). Drawing on her experience in ethnographic fieldwork, she conducted interviews with participants and residents regarding their thoughts and opinions on this international commemorative event in light of the politics of Auschwitz-Birkenau versus Oświęcim- Brzezinka, and the supposed "Judaization" (to use Geneviève Zubrzycki's term) of what was for decades considered a place of Polish suffering. She plans to continue her research in the coming year by examining documentation made available by Poland's Institute of National Remembrance and by visiting regional archives in Poland.

As Sinnott refines her dissertation project, under the direction of Professor Thomas Kühne, she plans to improve her knowledge of Polish. In summer 2020, she plans to participate in an intensive language study program at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. While in Poland, she will conduct archival visits to begin collecting sources on the prosecution of pogroms and intimate violence perpetrators (defined as crimes against the Polish nation).