

Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov

Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History

Polish Academy of Sciences

### **The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee: counterculture or not?**

The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAC), founded in 1941, was one of several such committees created in the USSR at the order of Stalin with the goal to gain Western support after the outbreak of the German-Soviet war. The JAC, headed by the Yiddish actor and theater director Shloyme Mikhoels, gathered various recognizable Jewish public figures, including Yiddish and Russian-speaking writers, scientists, artists and military men. Unexpectedly for many, it turned soon into a kind of a national representation of Soviet Jewry, which contributed to its later disaster: in 1948 the JAC got officially dissolved and in 1952 fifteen of its activists, including the most prominent Soviet Yiddish writers, got sentenced to death as nationalistic and anti-Soviet traitors. The lecture will present the tragic history of the JAC, its most important leaders and activities, and will try to answer the title question: can the JAC be considered a countercultural phenomenon? Why or why not?