

WORKSHOP

Organizer:

Susanne Korb

University of Graz

Aleksandra Jakubczak

POLIN museum

GENDER IN JEWISH STUDIES

EVERYDAY HISTORY AND
CULTURE IN CENTRAL
AND EASTERN EUROPE

Center for Jewish Studies,
University of Graz

16.10.
2023

12:00 – 18:30



We work for
tomorrow



Gender in Jewish Studies

Re-Evaluations of Jewish Everyday History and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe

For the past few decades, flourishing gender studies have provided new heuristic tools, theoretical reflections, and methodological approaches that have brought fruitful results also in historical research. Cross- and intercategory angles based on concepts such as intersectionality expanded conventional historiographical narratives and thus, not least, contributed significantly to new findings in Jewish studies. Perspectives on Jewish history and culture drifted towards more open, mutual, and sensitive understandings of categorizing individuals and groups. The inclusion of gender helped to reflect on how encounters, exchanges, and diverse forms of togetherness unfolded in different historical pasts. This has particularly fostered microhistorical case studies that contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the everyday life of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe.

With this workshop gathering scholars specializing in Jewish and non-Jewish history in Europe, we seek to stimulate the discussion on the place of Jewish studies in the gendered history of the region and situate Jewish Studies in the broader academic landscape transformed by the gendered turn.

During the workshop, we foresee to discuss encounters between Jewish and non-Jewish men and women; perspectives on queerness, masculinity, or femininity; aspects of distinct gendered Jewish history. Questions to be addressed include: In which perspectives on everyday life does gender prove to be a relevant category of analysis? Which intersectional aspects are relevant in interpreting frequent encounters between Jews and non-Jews? Which theoretical frames help us to sharpen our research on agency in daily working patterns?

12:00

Welcome

Aleksandra Jakubczak
POLIN Museum Warsaw
and
Susanne Korbelt
University of Graz

12:15–13:30

Keynote

The Economic Crises of the Interwar Years and Their Impact on the Intimate Lives of Polish Jewish Women

Aleksandra Jakubczak
POLIN Museum Warsaw

13:30 LUNCH

Workshop PROGRAM

Discussants:
Klaus Hödl
University of Graz
Heidrun Zettelbauer
University of Graz

16.10.
2023

15:15–16:45

Papers

Jewish Homosexual Men in Interwar Poland. Between Crime, Malady, and Individual Subjectivities

Mariusz Kalczewiak
University of Southern California, Los Angeles

An Uncommon Gender Gap? The Question of Central European Jewish Cookbooks and their Authors

Martina Niedhammer
Collegium Carolinum Munich/ University of Graz

Intimacies in Budapest and Vienna around 1900

Susanne Korbelt
University of Graz

16:45–17:15 COFFEE BREAK

17:15–18:00

Journal Launch

Nashim special issue

Jewish Women in Post-War Central and Eastern Europe

Eleonore Lappin-Eppel
Austrian Academy of Sciences/ University of Graz

18:00–18:30

Final Discussion

18:30 WORKSHOP DINNER

KEYNOTE

Aleksandra Jakubczak

(POLIN Museum Warsaw)

THE ECONOMIC CRISES OF THE INTERWAR YEARS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE INTIMATE LIVES OF POLISH JEWISH WOMEN

The various economic downturns in the interwar years had far-reaching consequences for the financial well-being of millions of Jews living in Poland. Yet, they also affected the most intimate spheres of Polish Jewish lives – the privacy of their households, sexuality, and marital practices. This talk will explore how the economic hardships experienced collectively and individually by Jewish citizens of the Polish Republic changed the most personal sphere of Jewish life as commercial sex and other forms of labor penetrated the Jewish home, and marriage became increasingly an economic strategy.

PAPERS

Mariusz Kalczewiak

(University of Southern California, Los Angeles)

JEWISH HOMOSEXUAL MEN IN INTERWAR POLAND. BETWEEN CRIME, MALADY, AND INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTIVITIES

In the 1920s and 1930s, we observed the first-time appearance of Polish-Jewish homosexual subjectivities, yet this development was accompanied by oppressive social attitudes towards homosexual men. Following an overview of expert discussions on homosexuality in Poland, I explore how Polish-Jewish debates placed

homosexual men within a semantic realm of deviation and crime and how the male homosexual was defined as a sexual predator threatening normative heterosexual masculinity through seduction. Using case studies of adolescent Józef Halpern from Lviv, the young painter from Warsaw Józef Rajnfeld, and the much older Łódź manager Leon Waks, I demonstrate how these Jewish men conceptualized their homosexual desire as a major aspect of their gender identities. In the final section, I show how Polish-Jewish men employed homophobic discourses about Muslims and German Nazis to stabilize their fragile heteronormative masculinities.

Martina Niedhammer

(Collegium Carolinum Munich)

AN UNCOMMON GENDER GAP? THE QUESTION OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN JEWISH COOKBOOKS AND THEIR AUTHORS

The history of cuisine as an important part of everyday history offers various glimpses into aspects of gender that go far beyond simple equations of female kitchen work and male expertise in the area of hygiene or gourmandism. This counts also for Jewish historiography which has paid increasing attention to questions of foodways in recent years. In my paper, I want to take a closer look at those who wrote and compiled cookbooks explicitly marked as Jewish during the 19th and early 20th century in Central Europe. Other than in the case of non-Jewish cookbooks, the authors of Jewish cooking manuals mostly were or pretended to be female. This might have been the result of a distinct understanding of Jewish women as gatekeepers of religious tradition and “soft” mediators of modern lifestyles at once.

Susanne Korb

(University of Graz)

INTIMACIES IN BUDAPEST AND VIENNA AROUND 1900

Personal encounters between Jews and non-Jews outside public spheres in Budapest and Vienna around 1900 were frequent and diverse, despite historiography about Jews in the emergence of modernity remaining characterized by a narrative of private isolation. In this presentation, I outline different intimacies and analyze multifarious encounters between Jews and non-Jews in the “private” spaces of everyday life. Where and how did Jews and non-Jews in Budapest and Vienna come into contact with one another in “private” rooms around 1900? What areas of daily life can be defined as Jewish and non-Jewish spaces of interaction and interethnic exchange? What effect did such spaces of intimacy have on (negotiations of) gender?

JOURNAL LAUNCH

Eleonore Lappin-Eppel

(Austrian Academy of Sciences/ University of Graz)

NASHIM SPECIAL ISSUE “JEWISH WOMEN IN POST-WAR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE”

Nashim is an international, interdisciplinary, and scholarly journal in Jewish women’s and gender studies. Bet Debora is a European network of Jewish women activists from all streams of Judaism, women artists, and women scholars as well as women rabbis, cantors, and community officials, and that it is characterized by scholarly, political, cultural, and artistic debates. In 2022 the editors of Nashim asked mem-

bers of the board of Bet Debora Vienna to function as guest editors for a special issue on the history of Jewish women in Central and Eastern Europe after the Shoah, a topic that has long been neglected. The contributions for the journal cover a wide spectrum of methodological approaches to this topic.

The article on Aniko Szenes by Andrea Petö discusses how in Hungary the intersection of interconnected and mutually constitutive circles of forgetting resulted in a canonized history of her life, highlighting different elements of her story in different periods while omitting other parts and finally condemning her to oblivion in postwar Hungary.

Eleonore Lappin-Eppel presents six Viennese women who after Austria’s annexation to Nazi Germany did not manage to flee and survived the Shoah either in Vienna or in a concentration camp. After their liberation they belonged to the small minority who stayed in Austria. Based on the argument of Marion Kaplan the author shows that gender, class, age and family bonds were the cause for the women to stay after the Nazi takeover, but also after liberation.

In her essay about German-Jewish women thinkers Elisa Klapheck describes her personal quest for the political role of Jews and Judaism in European history. Using her approaches to the works of Hanna Arendt, Regina Jonas and Margaret Susman as examples Klapheck discusses important topics like Jewish renewal, Jewish feminism and the position of Jewish feminists and scholars in their German and international environment.

Galina Zelenina’s article examines Hasidic women’s outlook, self-image, and everyday life in a contemporary Lubavitcher community in Moscow, Russia. The women

discussed here come from secular families but have “returned” to Judaism in their early adulthood. Their ideas and lifestyle are examples of a conservative modernism that centers around family, community and religious practice.

In my talk I am going to discuss the different approaches to Jewish renewal in post-Shoah Europe and how the study of the lives and fates of Jewish women can deepen our understanding of Jewish as well as women’s history.

PARTICIPANTS

Klaus Hödl is historian at the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz. He has worked on Jewish/non-Jewish relations in Vienna.

Aleksandra Jakubczak specializes in the social and economic history of Eastern European Jewry in the modern period. She is a chief historian at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and a research fellow at the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She received her Ph.D. in Jewish History at Columbia University for her doctoral dissertation, entitled *(Sex)Worker, Migrant, Daughter: The Jewish Economics of Sex Work and Mobility, between 1870 and 1939*. Her Polish-language monograph, entitled *Poles, Jews and the Myth of Trafficking* (2020) was shortlisted for the Schmeruk and Gierowski’s Prize for the best book in Polish Jewish Studies.

Mariusz Kalczewiak is a social and cultural historian of Modern Eastern Europe and Latin America and a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Before coming to USC, he taught

modern Jewish, Latin American, and East European history in Warsaw (Poland) and Potsdam (Germany). Mariusz holds a PhD in history from Tel Aviv University (2017). His first monograph *Polacos in Argentina. Polish Jews, Interwar Migration, and the Emergence of Transatlantic Jewish Culture* (Alabama University Press, 2020) explored the transnational history of Polish-Jewish migration to Argentina. His second book *Men of Valor and Anxiety. Polish-Jewish Masculinities and the Challenge of Modernity* is under exclusive review with Indiana University Press.

Susanne Korbel is principal investigator of the FWF funded project “Entanglements of Jews and non-Jews in private spaces in Budapest and Vienna, 1900–1930” (FWF ESP120) and lecturer at the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz. She specializes in cultural studies, gender studies, migration, and Jewish history. The project she is currently working on investigates encounters between Jews and non-Jews in housing sites in order to develop new, non-exclusive narratives based on everyday life aiming to overcome narratives of particularity. Her first book is entitled *Auf die Tour! Jüdinnen und Juden in Singspielhalle, Kabarett und Varieté zwischen Habsburgermonarchie und Amerika um 1900* (Böhlau 2021). She has held fellowships in Jerusalem, New York, Southampton, and Tübingen, and taught as visiting faculty at the Andrassy University Budapest and the University of Haifa.

Eleonore Lappin-Eppel is an Austrian historian living in Vienna. From 1989-2009 she worked at the Institute for Jewish History in Austria. In 2009 she became senior researcher at the Institute for Cultural Sciences and Theatre History of the Aus-

trian Academy of Science and in 2010 staff member of the Centre for Jewish Studies at Karl-Franzens-University, Graz. Her major areas of research are the Nazi persecution of Jews in Austria, transitional justice in Austria and memorial politics in Austria. Her major publications in these fields are: *Ungarisch-jüdische Zwangsarbeiterinnen und Zwangsarbeiter in Österreich 1944/45. Arbeitseinsatz – Todesmärsche – Folgen*, Vienna 2010; and *Topographie der Shoah: Gedächtnisorte an das zerstörte jüdische Wien*, zusammen mit Dieter Hecht und Michaela Raggam Blesch, Wien 2015.

Martina Niedhammer received her Ph.D. from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where she specialized in Jewish and Central European history. Her first book “‘Nur eine Geld-Emancipation’? Loyalitäten und Lebenswelten des Prager jüdischen Großbürgertums 1800–1867” was awarded the Max Weber-Preis by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in 2013. Currently, Martina is writing her second book which analyzes standardization processes of three European minor languages (Yiddish, Belarusian, Occitan) from the perspective of cultural history. Since 2011, she has been a research associate at Collegium Carolinum in Munich. During the winter term 2023/24, Martina serves as guest professor for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz.

Heidrun Zettelbauer is gender historian and cultural scientist, and since December 2022 professor for Cultural and Gender History at Graz University. She is member of the editorial board of the peer-reviewed journals *Zeitgeschichte* and *L’Homme*. *European Journal of Feminist History* and currently is acting as project leader of an Elisabeth-List-Fellowship-Programme on

“War Welfare and Gender Politics in the First World War” (2021–2023) in collaboration with the University of Leeds (UK). She is head of the Doctoral Programme Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, coordinator of the Cluster Gender within the research network Heterogeneity and Cohesion, and co-coordinator of the Cluster In/Equalities of the profile area Dimensions of Europe (DoE) at Graz University. In her research, she focuses on Gender and Cultural Theory, Modern and Contemporary History, nationalism, auto-/biography, or body history.

The workshop is part of the FWF Esprit Project ESP 120. The workshop is organized within the Global Education Outreach program, supported by Taube Philanthropies, the William K. Bowes, Jr. Foundation, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland, and with the support of the World Union of Jewish Studies.

IMPRINT

Center for Jewish Studies,
University of Graz
Beethovenstraße 21
A-8010 Graz

E-Mail: susanne.korbel@uni-graz.at
Web: juedischestudien.uni-graz.at

Design: Andrea Posteiner
Communications and Public Affairs,
University of Graz

Cover: Dhruv Weaver/unsplash.com

© September 2023



juedischestudien.uni-graz.at

Cooperation partner

