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Syllabus  
Jewish History in Multiethnic East-Central Europe, 1850-1918  
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This short course looks at Jewish history in the context of two multinational empires: the Russian and the Habsburg. Both of these states must be understood as fundamentally pre-modern, non-national (even anti-national) political structures, a fact that is crucial for understanding Jewish history here. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the great majority of world Jewry made its home in this region and even at the end of the First World War, after the great wave of emigration to the Americas, western Europe, Erets Israel / Palestine, and South Africa, the Jewish presence here was considerable. In 1918 even antisemites could hardly imagine a Warsaw, Wilno, Lwów, Odesa (etc.) without Jews.

During our week together, we will examine a number of crucial topics in Jewish history, all of which were affected by the surrounding politics, populations, and economy of this territory. Our approach will attempt to integrate Jewish history into larger trends and transformations of this period. In European history, Jews provide an unusual (though not absolutely unique) example of a ethno-cultural group that to a great extent retained its cultural separateness into the twentieth century. As we will see, however, even in the *shtetlekh* of the Pale of Settlement and Galicia, Jews were affected by economic, political, and cultural transformations coming from Paris, Berlin, London, even New York. Some of our readings and discussions will look into these influences across the European continent and beyond, e.g., relations between Jews and the states, tensions between tradition and “modernity” (however defined!) in the Jewish community, the creation of modern Jewish politics, Jews as urban dwellers, and the rise of modern antisemitism (as opposed to traditional Christian prejudice against Jews).

Our meetings will follow a seminar format which presupposes that **all students read all required texts**. My own lectures will consider some of the main issues and controversies of the topic at hand (i.e., Jews in the Russian Empire and Russification) after which we will go over to a discussion of the topic and the assigned readings. Lectures and discussions will be in Polish and/or Russian – the instructor apologizes in advance for his linguistic errors and even more profoundly for his shameful ignorance of the Ukrainian language.

## 1. Russian Empire, Russification, Jews

(The Russian Empire was not a nation-state. However, in the final half-century of its existence and even more during the Duma period after the 1905 Revolution, non-Russian peoples – in particular in European Russia – increasingly came to perceive the Russian state as an enemy to non-Russian people and culture. Discrimination against Jews fit into this pattern of general preference for Russian culture and language, but there were also peculiar and specific elements to tsarist Russia's anti-Jewish policies.)

### *Required readings:*

T. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier 1863-1914*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois UP, 1996, pp. 3-43.

### *For further reading:*

Андреас Каппелер, Россия – многонациональная империя: возникновение, история, распад. Москва, 1997.

Алексей И. Миллер, Украинский вопрос в политике властей и русском общественном мнении (вторая половина XIX века), С.Петербург: Алетеря, 2000).

Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

T. Weeks, *Across the Revolutionary Divide: Russia and the USSR 1861-1945*, Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2011, Chapter 3: Nations.

### Questions to consider:

1. How did the Russian Empire differ in politics, economy, and society from a modern nation-state?
2. In what ways were policies toward Russia's Jews similar to "nationality policy" toward other nations? How did Jewish policies differ?
3. How did the legal situation of Russia's Jews change from ca. 1850 to 1914?

## 2. Habsburg Empire, Dualism, Jews

### *Required readings:*

Израэль Бартадь, *От общины к нации: Евреи восточной европы в 1772-1881 гг., Иерусалим/Москва, 2007*, глава 6 (стр. 107-124), глава 11 (стр. 193-206).

Яков Кац, *Исход из гетто. Социальный контекст эмансипации евреев, 1770 – 1870*, Иерусалим – Москва 2007, стр. 222 - 252.

### *For further reading:*

Piotr Wróbel, The Jews of Galicia under Austrian-Polish Rule 1869-1918, *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. XXV (1994), 97-138.

Tomasz Gąsowski, Jewish Communities in Autonomous Galicia: Their Size and Distribution, in *The Jews in Poland*, vol. 1, red. Andrzej K. Paluch, Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński 1992, 205-221.

Michael Stanislawski *A Murder in Lemberg: Politics, Religion, and Violence in Modern Jewish History*, Princeton UP 2007.

### Questions to consider:

1. How did the legal and economic situation of Jews in Galicia differ from that of Jews in the Pale of Settlement (Russian Empire)? What similarities were there?
2. Jews were often seen as the most loyal nation in the Habsburg Empire. Why?
3. In what ways did the emancipation of Jews in the Habsburg Empire differ from that in the Russian Empire?

### 3. Haskalah, Hasidism, Tradition

#### *Required readings:*

Shmuel Feiner: *Towards a Historical Definition of the Haskalah*, [in:] *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, ed. Shmuel Feiner and David Sorkin (London and Portland, 2001), pp. 184-219.

David Assaf: *Chasydyzm: zarys historii*, w: *Światło i słońce. Studia z dziejów chasydyzmu*, red. Michał Galas, Kraków 2006, 11-38.

Израэль Барта́ль, *От общины к нации: Евреи восточной европы в 1772-1881 гг., Иерусалим/Москва, 2007*, глава 4ая: Хасиды, митнадгим и маскилим (стр. 73-88).

#### *For further reading:*

Rafael Mahler: *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment. Their Confrontation in Galicia and Poland in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, Philadelphia 1985.

Murray Jay Rossman, *Founder of Hasidism: A Quest for the Historical Ba'al Shem Tov*, Berkeley: UC Press, 1996.

Marcin Wodziński, *Oświecenie żydowskie w Królestwie Polskim wobec chasydyzmu*, Warszawa 2003.

#### Questions to consider:

- 1) What was the Haskalah? What does the Hebrew word mean and what does this term designation in the context of East (and Central)-European Jewish history?
- 2) Hasidism and the Haskalah are usually seen as opposing philosophies. Can you see any similarities?
- 3) Traditional Jews (the mitnadgim) opposed both Hasidism and the Haskalah – why?

#### 4. Modern Jewish Politics: Zionism, Bund, Assimilation

*Required readings:*

Йонатан Френкель, *Пророчество и политика: Социализм, национализм и русское еврейство, 1862-1917*, Москва-Уерусалим, 2008), стр. 187-228; 266-298 (Bund).

Alina Cała, *Asymilacja Żydów w Królestwie Polskim (1864-1897): Postawy, konflikty, stereotypy*, Warszawa: PIW, 1989, pp. 315-344.

*For further reading:*

Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, New York 1993.

Agnieszka Jagodzińska, *Pomiędzy. Akulturacja Żydów Warszawy w drugiej połowie XIX wieku*, Wrocław 2008.

Questions to consider:

- 1) One may take Zionism, nationalism, and assimilation as three possible “answers” to the “Jewish question” (of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century). How would you characterize the most important elements of each “program”?
- 2) The Bund combined socialism and Jewish cultural nationalism – can you think of other Eastern-European socialist parties that attempted a similar amalgam? Why would such a combination make more sense in, say, Wilno than in Vienna or Bruxelles?
- 3) What were some of the main differences between Zionists and Bundists ca. 1900? Did they agree on any points?

## 5. Antisemitism as Modern Politics: the Polish example

### *Required readings:*

T. Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism: the 'Jewish Question' in Poland, 1850-1914*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois UP, 2006, pp. 3-11; 170-178.

T. Weeks, "Assimilation, Nationalism, Modernization, Antisemitism: Notes on Polish-Jewish Relations, 1855-1905" in Robert Blobaum, ed., *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005, pp. 20-38.

Andrzej Żbikowski, *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce. Ideologia antysemitcka 1848-1914. Wybór tekstów źródłowych*, Warsaw: ŻIH, 1994, pp. 7-22, 45-57, 69-71, 113-129.

### *For further reading:*

Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

### Questions to consider:

1. Political antisemitism is often connected to "modernity." Define "modernity" and explain how antisemitism fits (or doesn't).
2. What factors made antisemitism grow in popularity and in "political legitimacy" in the Polish lands from the 1880s to 1914?
3. What links can be made between traditional religious judeophobia and modern antisemitism? What differences are there?

## 6. Jews as Urban Dwellers: Vilne, Odesa, Warsaw

### *Required readings:*

Scott Ury, *Barricades and Banners: The Revolution of 1905 and the Transformation of Warsaw Jewry*, Stanford UP 2012, pp. 22-44.

Steven Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881*, Stanford UP, 1986, pp. 1-7, 70-95.

T. Weeks, "The Transformation of Jewish Vilna, 1881-1939" in Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Brian J. Horowitz, eds., *Studies in Jewish Civilization, vol. 16: The Jews of Eastern Europe* (Omaha, Neb.: Creighton University Press, 2005), 143-164.

### *For further reading:*

Michal Galas, Antony Polonsky, eds., *Polin 23: Jews in Kraków*. (2011)

Ezra Mendelsohn, *People of the City: Jews and the Urban Challenge, Studies in Contemporary Jewry, volume 15* (1999).

### Questions to consider:

- 1) What factors made Jews a mainly urban population? Was this true throughout Eastern Europe?
- 2) What were some of political and sociological peculiarities of the Jews in Vilna, Warsaw, and Odesa?
- 3) What factors explain the high percentage of Jews in the cities of East-Central Europe (as opposed to Jews on the countryside and as compared to Western European cities)?

## 7. World War I and the Jews

### *Required readings:*

Konrad Zieliński, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach Królestwa Polskiego w czasie pierwszej wojny światowej*. Lublin: Wydawn. Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005, pp. 101-113, 187-206.

Hirsz Abramowicz, *Profiles of a Lost World. Memoirs of East European Jewish Life before World War I*, Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1999, pp. 177-218.

### *For further reading:*

Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I*, New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Frank Schuster, *Zwischen allen Fronten: Osteuropäische Juden während des Ersten Weltkrieges (1914-1919)*, Köln: Böhlau, 2004.

### Questions to consider:

1. In what ways did Jews experience a “different war” 1914-1918 when compared to Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians, or other nationalities?
2. How were Polish-Jewish relations strained by events of the war?
3. How typical do you think Hirsz Abramowicz’s experiences in Wilno during the war were? What specific experiences do you find unusual or unique?