

Howard Lupovitch
Winter/2012

History 9412B: Jewish Politics – Zionism, Socialism, Assimilationism

In this course, we will explore the political aims and strategies of Jews during the last two centuries. The central theme of the course will be the Jewish search for agency and the critiques of alleged passivity. During the first half of the course, after briefly surveying the political outlook of Jews in the pre-modern world, we will turn to the efforts by nineteenth century Jews to gain citizenship, notably a fervent embrace of liberalism, socialism, and various forms of assimilation. During the second half of the course, we will explore the rise of Zionism and other forms of Jewish nationalism, Jewish forms of socialism, and hybrid political movements that combined elements of nationalism, socialism, and assimilationism. The thrust of the course will be the maturing of these various nineteenth century political movements during the twentieth century in the various centers of World Jewry during the twentieth: Inter-war Poland, The Soviet Union, the United States, and the State of Israel.

Discussion Topics and weekly reading assignments:

- Jan 12 Introduction: Medieval Jewish Strategies and Early Modern Apologetics
Reading: Simone Luzzatto: *In Defense of Israel*
Menasseh ben Israel, *Letter to Oliver Cromwell*
- 19 *Shtadlanut* and its Critics
Reading: David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*
Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics*
Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Servants of Kings"
- 26 Enlightenment, Emancipation, Assimilation
Reading: Ira Katznelson and Pierre Birnbaum, *Paths to Emancipation*
Michael Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*
Tibor Frank, "Mor Wahrman"
- Feb 2 The Jew as Revolutionary and Counter-Revolutionary
Reading: Robert Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: Dialectics of Emancipation*
Werner Jacob Cahnman, "Adolf Fischhof and his Jewish Followers"
- 9 Modern Jewish Politics as Responses to Anti-Semitism
Reading: Leo Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation*
Theodore Herzl, *The Jewish State*
Ezra Mendelssohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*
- 16 Nationalism and Socialism Combined I: Labor Zionism
Reading: TBA
- Mar 1 Nationalism and Socialism Combined II: The Bund
Reading: Ezra Mendelssohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale*

Zvi Gitelman ed, *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism*

8 Nationalism and Assimilationism: Autonomism

Reading: Simon Dubnow, *Nationalism and History*

15 Orthodoxy Politicized

Reading: Gershon Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland*

22 American Jewry: Assimilation and the Politics of Ethnicity

Reading: Deborah Dash Moore, *B'nai Brith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership*

Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: the History of the American Jewish Committee*

29 Jewish Politics during the Holocaust

Reading: Isaiah Trunk, *The Judenrat*

Apr 5 Israel and the Challenges of Jewish Sovereignty

ReadingL TBA