

Oberlin College/Spring 2015

Jewish Studies/History 320

## **The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics, 1848-1948**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:15-3:15 PM and by appointment

**Lectures: Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 PM (King 227)**



### **Course Description:**

An old joke has it that every three Jews have (at least) four different views. Students will come to appreciate the kernel of truth in that joke during the semester, as we will examine the multifaceted spectrum of ideologies, movements, parties, and individuals that constituted the emerging Jewish politics during their formative years. Focusing primarily on three centers – Eastern Europe, the U.S., and the Land of Israel – we will look at how those different movements sought to solve what was called “The Jewish Question”. We will look at how the various forces on the Jewish street sought to settle

that question, where did they think Jews should live, what language(s) should Jews speak, with which political and cultural movements in the Gentile world did they empathize, and what political tactics did they favor.

Moreover, the questions and situations faced by Jewish ideologies and political movements were often, quite literally, a matter of life or death: among other topics, our discussion would turn to the fierce internal Zionist debates about the use of force in the increasing Jewish-Arab conflict in the Land of Israel. Those crucial dilemmas generated profound intra-Jewish controversies and divisions, some of which have continued to this very day.

### **Course Requirements:**

This class requires attendance, preparation, and active participation.

**Attendance:** Attendance in lecture is required and constitutes 10% of your final grade. I will take attendance each time and any student who misses TWO or more lectures throughout the semester will get an “F” grade (for those 10% of the final grade). Any student who misses **25% or more** of the course’s total number of lectures will FAIL the class. If extenuating circumstances such as illness force a student to miss one or more classes, please email me. The student remains responsible for the material covered during her/his absence. A physician’s note is required in such a case. If a circumstance hinders your ability to attend regularly or fulfill other requirements, please see me as soon as possible. **Tardiness** is disruptive to the class and unacceptable. If a student is tardy (arriving more than TWO minutes after the beginning of class) THREE times, it will constitute one unexcused absence. The same goes for leaving class before it ends.

**Preparation:** I cannot overemphasize the importance of your reading assignments. You are expected to read ALL the assigned materials in advance of class, and be prepared to discuss them. A failure to read the assigned materials will affect your final grade. If a class session is cancelled for any reason, e.g., inclement weather, prepare as usual for that missed class day, and prepare the next class reading for its scheduled time: in any case you should stay current with the syllabus. I may examine your level of preparation even unexpectedly (e.g. with a pop quiz).

**Participation:** informed participation in class is required and will affect your grade. I welcome your *informed* input during class, and may call on you.

### **Final Grade Breakdown:**

Attendance – 10%

**Informed** participation, preparation, oral report (each student must deliver one report in class and submit a write up), and possible pop quizzes – 25% (combined)

Midterm exam – 20%

Term paper – 20%

Final exam – 25%.

Please note: late assignments will lose 10 points for every day late.

>99%	A+
96-99%	A
92-95%	A-
88-91%	B+
84-87%	B
78-83%	B-
74-77%	C+
69-73%	C
65-68%	C-
60-64%	D
Below 60%	F

### **In-Class Intermission:**

Since our weekly meetings will be quite long, we will usually have a 5-minute break in the middle of our meeting (around 8:00 PM). Still, I reserve the right to shorten or postpone the break according to the meeting's circumstances.

## **Standards of Student Conduct:**

The use of computers in class is STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. The ONLY exception would be students who can provide an authorization from the learning disabilities office (<http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/documentation/>) detailing a learning disability that requires the use of a computer. The use of texting, cell phones and pagers is also strictly forbidden. Students violating these rules will be asked to leave the class for the day, and will have an absence recorded for that date.

## **Standards of Academic Integrity and the Honor Code:**

As all courses in Oberlin, this course operates under the Honor Code, including but not limited to, prohibition of plagiarism. Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the Code. Information about the Honor Code is available on the College website and the Honor Code committee.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the appropriation and subsequent passing off of another's ideas or words as one's own. If the words or ideas of another are used, acknowledgement of the original source must be made through recognized referencing practices. Use of another's ideas or words must be properly acknowledged as follows:

(1) Direct Quotation: Any use of direct quotation must be acknowledged by footnote citation and by either quotation marks or proper indentation and spacing.

(2) Paraphrase: If another's ideas are borrowed in whole or in part and are merely recast in the student's own words, proper acknowledgement must, nonetheless, be made. A footnote or proper internal citation must follow the paraphrased material.

For more information, see <http://www.oberlin.edu/library/avoiding-plagiarism.html>

## **Required Books**

Arthur Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader

Ezra Mendelsohn, On Modern Jewish Politics

Anita Shapira, Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948

All the assigned books are available for purchase at the campus bookstore. There is also a copy of each book on reserve at the Mudd Library. The other readings are available online via Blackboard. **There are no excused failures to obtain the readings.**

# Primary sources (online)

\* Secondary sources (online)

## **Lectures and Reading**

### **Week 1 (Feb. 3): Introduction – What are “Jewish Politics”?**

Mendelsohn, On Modern Jewish Politics, vii-ix, 3-36.

\* Daniel J. Elazar, “Introduction: The *Edah* as a Classic Republic”, in Daniel J. Elazar (ed.), Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and Its Contemporary Uses, 3-8.

\* “East European Jewry”, “The American Experience”, and “Zionism”, in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 372-374, 449-451, 529-531.

### **Week 2 (Feb. 10): The Old Jewish Politics and the Precursors of Jewish Nationalism**

Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, “Seeking Zion” (1862), Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, 109-114.

Moses Hess, “Rome and Jerusalem” (1862), Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, 116-123, 132-134.

Peretz Smolenskin, “It Is Time to Plant”, Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, 143-147.

# “Philadelphia Jewry Protests against Persecution of Jews in Damascus” (1840), Jacob R. Marcus (ed.), The Jew in the American World, 185-187.

# “San Francisco Jewry Appeals to the U.S. Senate to Denounce the Abduction of Edgar Mortara” (1859), Marcus (ed.), The Jew in the American World, 288-290.

\* Jacob Katz, Out of the Ghetto, 191-219.

\* Jonathan Frankel, “Introduction: Crisis as a Factor in Nineteenth-Century Jewish History”, The Damascus Affair: “Ritual Murder”, Politics, and the Jews in 1840, 1-16.

### **Week 3 (Feb. 17): 1881 – The Big Bang?**

Mendelsohn, On Modern Jewish Politics, 37-62.

Excerpts by Moshe Leib Lilienblum and Leo Pinsker, Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea, 166-198.

# Judah Leib Levin, “To America or to the Land of Israel?” (1881), the “Am Olam” Movement (1883), and BILU, “Manifesto” (1882), Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 333-335, 377-378, 421-422.

# Pavel B. Axelrod, “Socialist Jews Confront the Pogroms”, Lucy S. Dawidowicz (ed.), The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe, 405-410.

\* Jonathan Frankel, “The Crisis of 1881-1882 as a Turning Point in Modern Jewish History”, David Berger (ed.), The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and Its Impact, 9-22.

### **Week 4 (Feb. 24): Varieties of Zionism**

Shapira, Land and Power, 3-82.

Theodor Herzl, excerpts from “The Jewish State”, Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea, 201-204, 218-226.

Ahad Ha-am, “The Negation of the Diaspora”, Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea, 249-251, 270-277.

Joseph Hayyim Brenner, “Self-Criticism”, Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea, 305-312,

Nahman Syrkin, “The Jewish Problem and the Socialist-Jewish State” (1898), Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea, 331-332, 340-351.

Yehiel Michael Pines, “Jewish Nationalism Cannot Be Secular”, and “Religion Is the Source of Jewish Nationalism”, Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea, 407-408, 411-414.

Louis D. Brandeis, “The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It”, Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea, 515-523.

# Manya Shohat, “The Woman in the Bund and in Poalei Zion” (1937), Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 425-428.

### **Week 5 (March 3): Varieties of Diaspora Nationalism**

Mendelsohn, On Modern Jewish Politics, 63-91.

# Simon Dubnow, “Autonomism” (1901), the Bund, “Decisions on the Nationality Question” (1899, 1901, 1905, 1910), Chaim Zhitlowsky, “Our Future in America” (1915), and Israel Zangwill, “A Manifesto”, Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 337-343, 388-389, 438-440.

# Vladimir Medem, “The Youth of a Bundist”, Dawidowicz (ed.), The Golden Tradition, 426-434.

\* David E. Fishman, “The Bund and Modern Yiddish Culture”, Zvi Gitelman (ed.), The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics, 107-119.

### **Week 6 (March 10): The Emergence of Orthodox Politics**

# Rabbi Zadok H. Rabinowitz, “The Zionists Are Not Our Saviors” (c. 1900), The Mizrahi, “Manifesto” (1902), and Agudat Israel, “Founding Program” (1912), Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 432-434, 436, 446-447.

\* Gershon Bacon, “The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Israel in Polish Politics, 1916-1930”, Studies in Contemporary Jewry (1986): 144-163.

\* Arthur Goren, “The Conservative Politics of the Orthodox Press”, The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews, 100-109.

\* Jeffrey S. Gurock, “American Orthodox Organizations in Support of Zionism”, American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective, 117-133.

## **Week 7 (March 17): Revolutionary Upheavals**

### **Midterm exam on Tuesday, March 17**

Shapira, Land and Power, 83-126

# Rosa Luxemburg, “No Room in My Heart for Jewish Suffering” (1916) and Yevsektsiya, “The Liquidation of Bourgeois Jewish Institutions” (1918), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 225-226, 350-353.

# Excerpt from Chaim Nachman Bialik, “The City of Slaughter”

\* Arthur Goren, “Socialist Politics on the Lower East Side”, The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews, 83-99.

\* Jonathan Frankel, “The Bundists in America and the ‘Zionist Problem’”, Gitelman (ed.), The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics, 181-196.

## **Week 8: Spring Break (March 21-29)**

## **Week 9 (March 31): Creating a “New Jew”**

Mendelsohn, On Modern Jewish Politics, 93-113.

Shapira, Land and Power, 257-276, 343-352.

# Max Nordau, “Jewry of Muscle” (1903) Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 547-548.

# Haim Hazaz, “The Sermon”, The Sermon & Other Stories, 231-249.

\* Arthur Goren, “Americanizing Zionist Pioneers”, The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews, 165-185.

\* Oz Almog, The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew, 138-159.



## **Week 10 (April 7): Interwar Developments**

Mendelsohn, On Modern Jewish Politics, 115-125.

Shapira, Land and Power, 173-257.

# Yitzhak Gruenbaum, "Why Did We Create the Minorities Bloc?" (1922), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 442-446.

# Vladimir Jabotinsky, "What the Zionist-Revisionists Want" (1926), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 594-597.

# David Frankel, "Kibbutz Hakhshara: A Memoir" (c. 1935), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 598-599.

# David Ben-Gurion, "On the Arab Question" (January 7, 1937), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 603-608.

# "The Columbus Platform" (1937), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 517-518.

\* Daniel Blatman, "National-Minority Policy, Bundist Social Organizations, and Jewish Women in Interwar Poland"; and Samuel D. Kassow, "The Left Poalei Tsiyon in Interwar Poland", Gitelman (ed.), The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics, 54-84.

## **Week 11 (April 14): The *Yishuv* Faces the Holocaust**

**Term Paper is due on Tuesday, April 14**

Shapira, Land and Power, 319-342.

# Hannah Senesh, Her Life and Diary (excerpt).

# Hanoch Bartov, The Brigade, 158-162.

# Yitzhak Sadeh, "My Sister on the Beach", in Ronit Lentin, Israel and the Daughters of the Shoah, 207.

\* Dina Porat, The Blue and Yellow Star of David, 1-2, 239-262.

## **Week 12 (April 21): American Jewry during the Holocaust**

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, "Toward American Jewish Unity" and "American Jewry in War and After", in Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, 591-602.

# The American Jewish Conference (January 1943), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 519-522.

# The American Council for Judaism, "A Statement of Policy" (February 1944), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 523-524.

\* Henry L. Feingold, Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust, 205-224.

## **Week 13 (April 28): A Jewish State – The Foundation of the State of Israel**

Shapira, Land and Power, 277-319, 353-370.

# "Proclamation of the State of Israel" (May 14, 1948), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 629-630.

# David Ben-Gurion, "Address to the Knesset on the Law of Return" (July 3, 1950) and "The Law of Return" (July 5, 1950), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 631-633.

# Hashomer Hazair, "The Case for a Bi-National Palestine" (1945), Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 702-705.

## **Week 14 (May 5): The Creation of Israel – A Look from Abroad**

Mendelsohn, On Modern Jewish Politics, 127-145.

Mordecai M. Kaplan, "The Future of the American Jew" (1948), in Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, 535-542.

David Ben-Gurion and Jacob Blaustein, "An Exchange of Views", Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (eds.), The Jew in the Modern World, 581-584.

## **Final Exam: Sunday, May 17 @ 9:00-11:00 AM**

No early or late exams will be permitted.