

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE AT THE CROSSROADS: JEWISH TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS AND IDENTITIES



CALL FOR PAPERS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE East Central Europe at the Crossroads: Jewish Transnational Networks and Identities 18-21 JUNE 2023 Polin Museum – Warsaw, Poland

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: 7 NOVEMBER 2022

ORGANIZERS

- POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw;
- YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York;
- Columbia University, New York;
- University of Buenos Aires;
- The Institute for the Study of Polish Jewry and Poland-Israel Relations, Tel Aviv University;
- Dubnow Institut, Leipzig;
- Institute for Jewish Studies & Slavic Institute, University of Potsdam;
- Taube Center for Jewish Studies, Wrocław University;
- History Department, Warsaw University;

IDEA

For centuries, the Polish lands were one of the main centers of Jewish life and culture. East Central Europe went through several political transformations as various states ruled the territory, but it remained the place with the largest concentration of Jewish people in the world. Though in the last century, the region lost most of its Jewish population to emigration and the Shoah, the Jewish civilization that formed in the region could not be completely destroyed, but rather was transferred along with migrants to various diaspora spread throughout the world in such far-flung locations as the United States, Argentina, South Africa, Australia and Palestine. Identities formed in East Central Europe continued to reflect the lifestyles, opinions and world-views of Jewish emigrants and their communities. Language, cuisine, politics, and economic activities all continued across oceans and continents.

Recent scholarship has challenged the lachrymose interpretation of Jewish migrations and the myth of no-return, by highlighting how Jews mostly emigrated for economic reasons, just like their non-Jewish counterparts from the region. When they left, migrating Jews did not envision that they would be cut off from their Polish roots. The transnational nature of Polish-Jewish society meant more than simply maintaining ties between Polish Jews in various locations. It left an imprint on the economic development of the Polish lands, on the imagination of the Jewish world, and on the modern socio-political consciousness of those who emigrated and stayed in Poland. With their international trade contacts, Jews became trailblazers of capitalism, helping to form Polish banking, railways and other industries. With daily newspapers and literature circulating beyond the two shores of the Atlantic Ocean, Polish Jews saw themselves as the part of a modern, global world. Polish Jews managed to pull what historian Jerzy Jedlicki called the “suburbs of Europe” into the global market and global communication network.

With these themes in mind, the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews is organizing an academic conference hosted at the Museum in Warsaw to bring together the latest scholarship on the broad themes of transnationalism, intersectionality and cross-border exchanges from the early modern period to the present.

APPLICATIONS

We invite scholars working on transnational Jewish subjects broadly conceived, including Ph.D. candidates, to apply with a paper proposal (in English only). Applications with a paper proposal and a short biographical note can be submitted through the [online form](#), all other inquiries about the conference, should be sent to crossroadsconf@polin.pl.

The applicants will be notified by email by December 1, 2022, about the result of their applications.

We are mostly interested in submissions related to the following topics, but not exclusively:

- Jewish transnational networks in the early modern period (for example, commercial and intellectual ones)
- Jewish spiritual life from a transnational perspective
- Jewish mass migration and the changes in awareness and self-perception of Jews who remained in East Central Europe
- East Central European Jewish culture (literature, press, theater) from a transnational perspective
- The heritage of East Central European Jews on diasporas in the areas of self-organizing, communal politics, involvement in various social and political movements, economic behavior (for example consumerism, concentration in specific segments of the labor market), culture, and self-definition
- Transnational character of relief networks during World War One and the Holocaust
- East Central European Jews during the Cold War from a transnational perspective

ORGANIZATION

The organizers will reimburse invited speakers' travel costs to and from the conference (economy class tickets) and will provide lodging during the event.

Conference language: English

Organizing Committee

Paula Ansaldo (Buenos Aires University); Aleksandra Jakubczak (POLIN Museum//Columbia University); Kamil Kijek (Wroclaw University); Rebecca Kobrin (Columbia University); Artur Markowski (Warsaw University); Zachary Mazur (POLIN Museum); Eddy Portnoy (YIVO Institute)

The conference is organized within
the Global Education Outreach Program.

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and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland.

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the European Association for Jewish Studies.

Organizers:



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