

Conference “Antisemitism and Sexualities Reconsidered”
Hosted by the Center for Research on Antisemitism (ZfA TU Berlin), and co-
organized by the German Historical Institute (Washington DC)
13-15 December 2021

Registration requested by 6 December 2021 to: fabricius@ghi-dc.org

Although constructions of Jewish sexualities and imaginations of Jewish attacks on sexual morals have played a significant role in modern antisemitic worldviews, – whether the same is true for premodern times has to be discussed –, only few historical studies have focused on the connection between sexualities and Jew-hatred. Against this backdrop, the conference aims to stimulate further research and debates on this topic. To bring the differences in the role sexualities played in judeophobic discourses at different times and in different regions into view, the temporal and geographical focus of the conference reaches beyond the times of modern antisemitism and beyond ‘Western societies.’

In manifold ways, sexualities have played a crucial role in the history of judeophobia. Since ancient times, sexuality has been one of the fields where the borders between different communities, Jewish and otherwise, were drawn most fiercely. At least, since the rise of modern antisemitism imaginations of deviant and dangerous ‘Jewish’ sexualities have played a crucial role. In modern antisemitism, sexual desires attributed to Jews have been characterized by a transgression of the male-female binarity – a characteristic, which corresponds with constructions of Jewish effeminate manhood and masculinized womanhood. Whereas discourses ascribed ‘unmanly’ desires to Jewish men in different ways, fantasies constructed Jewish women as seductive, passionate, and sexually active: attributes that have typically had a male connotation. At the same time, constructions of Jewish sexualities have reinforced notions of male activity and female passivity.

Historians have demonstrated that the alleged deviant sexualities of Jews were inscribed into their bodies. Since the end of the 17th century discursive linkages between the circumcised penis and sexual amorality were shaped in debates about Jewish bodies.

In addition, antisemitic discourses also constructed Jews as forces that used their alleged social power to undermine sexual morals and the sexual order. Adolf Hitler accused Jews of ‘mongrelizing’ the ‘white race’, Sayyid Qutb, a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood, lamented that Jews spread a doctrine of ‘animalistic sexuality’, and contemporary far rightists fantasize about an alleged Jew-driven ‘porn conspiracy’, which they would use to turn whole countries into “masturbatoria” and by this means strengthen and expand their alleged social dominance.

Conference funded by: German Research Foundation, German Historical Institute, Center for Research on Antisemitism

Conference Program

Monday, 13 December 2021

17:30 Arrival

18:00 Welcome by Convener (Anna-Carolin Augustin, GHI Washington; Sebastian Bischoff, Paderborn University; Kristoff Kerl, University of Copenhagen; Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, ZfA, TU Berlin).

18:15 Keynote lecture by Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (ZfA, TU Berlin): Rethinking Antisemitism & Sexuality.
Comment Dagmar Herzog (City University of New York)
Q&A

20:00: Conference Dinner

Tuesday, 14 December 2021

10:00 Panel I: White Slavery Narratives around 1900

Chair: n.n.

- Ruth Ennis (Leipzig University): Entangling the Old with the New. Anti-Semitic Stereotypes in the Global 'White Slave Trade' in Women, 1870-1899.
- Margarita Lerman (Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow): Migration, Procuration, and Moral Panic. Jewish Criminals in Fin de Siècle Galicia.
- Sören Urbansky (GHI Washington): 'White Slaves' of Chinatown. Interracial Intimacy in Turn of the Century Singapore, Vladivostok, and San Francisco.

11:15 Discussion

11:45 Coffee Break

12:00 Panel II: Sexuality and (Anti-)Zionism

Chair: n.n.

- Deborah Hertz (University of California at San Diego): Bertha Pappenheim and Zionism. Defending Prostitutes, Critiquing Kibbutz Families.
- Caroline Kahlenberg (Harvard University): 'The Girls of Israel Deceive'. Palestinian Arab National Mobilization of Jewish Women's Sexuality in Early 20th Century Palestine.
- Vojin Saša Vukadinović (FU Berlin): The Islamic Declaration of 1970. The Forgotten Call against Israel and Sexual Libertinage.

13:15 Discussion

13:45 Lunch

15:00 Panel III: Antisemitism and Jewish Perversions'

Chair: Richard Wetzell (GHI Washington)

- Gal Hertz (Tel Aviv University): 'Entrepreneurs of Vice'. Jewish Sexuality in Viennese Courts, ca. 1900.
- Benedikt Wolf (Bielefeld University): Homophobia and Antisemitism in Otto Julius Bierbaum's 'Prinz Kuckuck' (1907/08).
- Nadja Klopprogge (Justus Liebig University Giessen): *Sex & Race*. Exposing the Racist and Antisemitic Politics of History.

16:15 Discussion

16:45 Coffee Break

18:30 Discussion and Film screening (clips) 'Jud Süß', co-organized by the German Historical Museum/Zeughauskino

- Discussants: Elissa Mailänder (Sciences Po, Paris) and Gertrud Koch (FU Berlin)

Wednesday, 15 December 2021

10:00: Panel IV: Antisemitism, Gender, and Sexuality

Chair: n.n.

- Kerstin Mayerhofer (University of Vienna): 'Quam mulieres menstruosi sunt'. Perceptions of the 'Men-Struating' Jew.
- Jens Elberfeld (MLU Halle-Wittenberg): Anti-Semitism and the History of Juvenile Sexuality in Early 20th Century Germany.
- Lisa Silverman (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee): Veit Harlan's Jewish Women: Dora Gerson, Karena Niehoff, and the Postwar Antisemite.

11:15 Discussion

11:45 Coffee Break

12:15 Panel V: Jews, Sexuality, and the State

Chair: n.n.

- Lukas Uwira (Viadrina European University): The Notion of 'Jewish' Polygamy and the Alleged Inability to Found a State.
- Martina Kessel (Bielefeld University): The Threat of Democracy. Identity Politics, Sexual Tropes and the anti-Jewish Impulse in Modern Germany.

13:05 Discussion

13:25 Lunch

14:30 Panel VI: Contemporary Sexual Antisemitisms

Chair: n.n.

- Nathan Abrams (Bangor University): Subverting the Race. Jews, Porn, and Antisemitism in Contemporary American Discourse.
- Dani Kranz (Ben Gurion University of the Negev): Sexy Israelis and Exoticised Jews. When Imagined Otherness and Real People Meet.
- Jan Süselbeck (NTNU Trondheim)/Hans-Joachim Hahn (University of Basel): Sexually Harassed by Jews? Contemporary Debates on Berthold Woltze's Genre Painting 'Der lästige Kavalier' (1874).

15:45 Final discussion

16:30 End of conference