



Call for Papers for an International Conference on

Jewish Questions and the Global South: Between Sovereignty and Human Rights

The Jacob Robinson Institute for the History of Individual and Collective Rights

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mt. Scopus

May 16-18, 2022

Jewish perceptions of the end of empires have enjoyed renewed interest in historical scholarship with works on Jewish internationalism, humanitarian activism and philanthropism. Respective studies have advanced the historical reconsideration of the dichotomy between the quest for national sovereignty and universal imaginations of global governance and have thus allowed for new debates on the status of the nation in Jewish history. This conference suggests widening the geographical angle of Jewish political engagement towards post-imperial contexts. It locates the Jewish post-war balancing act between self-determination and minority representation in the numerous African and Asian contexts in search for national independence and explores the dilemmas local Jewish communities and international Jewish actors and organizations saw themselves confronted with. As the inaugural event of the Jacob Robinson Institute for the History of Individual and Collective Rights at the Hebrew University, the conference discusses continuations from interwar judicial and political debates on minority rights to post-war aspirations for independence. It historicizes the Jewish experience between empire and the post colony along the following guiding questions: How were early quests for post-imperial self-determination reflected in Jewish political debates? What did local anti-colonial struggles for independence mean to Jewish and other minorities in the respective contexts? How would the existence of Israel shape the relationship between Jewish minorities and national majorities in these spaces as well as the Jews' own approaches to questions of non-Jewish minorities?

In expanding on the debate of the nature of Jewish voices in the history and historiography of decolonization the conference's guiding themes can be addressed through the following sub-questions:

- What did the end of empires mean to Jews in their relationship with the former imperial rulers in colonial spaces?
- How did the history of decolonization shape the work of international and national Jewish bodies like the World Jewish Congress and Jewish humanitarian organizations?
- How did early histories of decolonization shape the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- How did Jewish responses to the transformations in former empires shape early Western "Third World" discourses?
- How was the One-World discourse reflected in Jewish cultural production and communication?
- What did the developments in the Global South do to the Jewish engagement with international communism and Jewish voices in the emerging New Left?

In pondering these topics, the conference seeks to further integrate the history of Jewish thought, cultural production and political activism into the global experience of Cold War decolonization. Viewed against the backdrop of the global Cold War It will provide a space to explore the complex entanglements of political ideologies, international frameworks of governance, cultural contributions to conceptualizations of modern citizenship and the global transfer of ideas.

**Paper proposals should include a title, an abstract (350 words), institutional affiliation and contact information.
Please submit proposals to rebekka.grossmann@mail.huji.ac.il by November 30, 2021.**

The conference is planned as an in-person event. In case international travel will be possible, travel costs (economy class) and the costs of accommodation in Jerusalem (4 nights) will be covered for participants from abroad.