



הקרן הלאומית למדע  
المؤسسة الإسرائيلية للعلوم  
Israel Science Foundation



הרשות הלאומית לתרבות הלאדינו  
La Autoridad Nacional del Ladino  
The National Authority for Ladino

On Campus | The long struggle of the Jewish working class of Thessaloniki for the implementation of a social and political agenda (1908-1943)

Research Workshop of the Israel Science Foundation

**Sunday | 11.06.2023**  
**Until Tuesday | 13.06.2023**

Location | the Ofer Observation Gallery, the 30th floor of Eshkol Tower

Type | Physical event

Price | Free admission

**Audience | Open to the public on pre-registration**

Organizers | Dr. Shai Srougo (University of Haifa); Dr. Gila Hadar (University of Haifa)

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## Workshop |

The last few decades have seen an upsurge of interest in the everyday life of Salonikian Jews during the 1900s-1940s; still, Jewish labor and Jewish socialism/communism have received little attention. Although, since the turn of the 21th century, the Ottoman and post-Ottoman labor history is becoming a field of great interest, in academic conferences on the working class of the Ottoman empire and its successor states (such as Greece), there are no substantial references to Jewish laborers, despite their pioneering contribution to the social struggles in the Balkans.

Our workshop will be the first to address this lacuna, as it will rightly put the Jewish working class of Thessaloniki in the center of discussion, presenting, thereby, their outstanding contribution in the development of social agenda and left-wing politics from *below* in southeastern Europe of early 1900s and up to WWII.

This workshop will bring together, for the first time, an international and interdisciplinary party of scholars (social, political, labor, and economic sciences on Ottoman and post-Ottoman periods), who focus on the Jewish working class history of Thessaloniki, enabling, thus, a unique platform for a constructive exchange and for future collaborative research.

The constructive exchange on the Salonikian Jewish working class will be conducted in close connection with the main methodological issues and conceptual advances of recent decades prevailing in the international labor historiography. As such, the workshop will attempt to conceptualize the thematic focus on Salonikian Jewish labor history through broader perspectives on culture, masculinity, gender, working- class solidarity, ethnic division and transnationality – all novel paradigms in labor writing.

In the workshop the gender paradigm, for instance, will be discuss through presenting broad range of raw materials - newspapers, diaries, oral-history interviews. Examining these primary sources in line with the traditional gender role beliefs will bring a new outlook on the then inferiority of Jewish female workers, as a distinct class, in both the labor market and the labor movement, and on their struggle to achieve recognition.

The Jewish women's activities received expression in a multi-ethnic city whose communal borders were fluid and dynamic. As a mixed city whose common space was negotiated on a daily basis, and following the spatial-turn approach, the workshop will also examine the formation of common spheres of Jewish laborers and leaders with their Greek counterparts during the Hellenization of the interwar years, and the period of Aryanization during WWII. The forum will reveal, for instance,

the early phase of ghettoization; the local fascist discourse aiming to oust the Jewish element from the Pan-Hellenic labor sphere - an aim which began in the 1930's and reached its nadir during the German occupation in WWII.

Organizing an international workshop around the issues of gender, masculinity, culture, and transnationality will situate the Jewish male/female labor history within a larger local and regional context to include the Ottoman labor history and the Greek labor history as well. We, as the academic workshop organizers, seek to connect the Jewish labor historiography with the non-Jewish labor historiography. By expanding the Jewish working class history to include the non-Jewish interpretation, the workshop will open up new questions and horizons for Sephardic Jewish labor history in Thessaloniki, and beyond - within the larger context of Ashkenazi/ Sephardic diaspora, contributing, thereby, to the global labor historiography of ethnic minorities in nation-states during the challenging times of the 1900's-1940's.

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**[The Scientific Program is available here:](#)**