

Tim Blanning, Chris Clark, Hartwin Spenkuch, and Jonathan Sperber. Instead, there is almost too much protesting over gaps in previous research, which Begass's book is meant to fill.

While the geographical focus concentrates on East and West Prussia, Silesia, Pomerania, and Brandenburg, there are occasional comparisons to the nobilities of France and England. The most obvious point of comparison, however, is left out: the landless nobility of Poland, which in the Constitution of May 1791 was deprived of its legal status. The introduction of property criteria and access for burghers to citizenship in Poland find a parallel in the rise of non-noble state servants to the top of the Prussian bureaucratic apparatus. At the same time, impoverished nobles eked out a miserable existence in the lowest Prussian administrative offices, long alienated from their ancestors' link to the land. The case studies – occasionally reiterated too frequently, leading to unnecessary lengths in the publication – leave the reader without doubt about the suffering of this significant group in Prussian society. Their heterogenous character prevented the development of any group consciousness. The author admits that the history of the nineteenth-century nobility, faced with a host of contingencies, cannot be written as a “history of the nobility,” treating the nobles as an estate or as a class. Leaving behind such “master narratives” is a refreshing perspective. If an “intersectionality” approach is to take their place, however, we will need to learn more about the opportunities that such an approach provides.

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It Could Lead to Dancing: Mixed-Sex Dancing and Jewish Modernity

**By Sonia Gollance. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021.
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Experiences of modernity permeated many people's lives in the long nineteenth century. This was a period when Jews became citizens in a number of European countries, contributing to shifts in self-conception; when people raised in farming families moved to cities, changing dynamics of work and leisure; when public spaces and entertainments vastly expanded, increasing possibilities for social interactions; and when many women began to seek greater pleasure in their lives, from love matches in marriage to careers as architects and painters.

These experiences of modernity mesh together in Sonia Gollance's book. One of the most widespread forms of social interaction in the long nineteenth century, mixed-sex social dancing served as an expression of modernity itself. Engaging with a social history of dance and its interpretations in Jewish literature across a range of decades, languages, and communities, the book focuses on the period from about 1780 to 1940, on texts in German and Yiddish, from numerous locales in Central and Eastern Europe and Yiddish-speaking immigrant communities in New York City.

It Could Lead to Dancing features middlebrow books grappling with the emotions of engaging in societal interactions and novels featuring romance narratives where social dancing figures prominently in courtships and women's pleasures. Unlike modernist poetry that circulated in a rarified milieu, middlebrow literature would have engaged a larger swath of the reading public, especially bourgeois women. Gollance notes that these texts

“analyze the dilemmas of modern Jewry in a critical, yet entertaining, way and engage directly with issues of gender” (6). As such, they reflect the dynamics of their social dance contexts and construct them as dance fictions that test the boundaries of taboos. Thus, mixed-sex social dancing signified motion on many levels: movements on the dance floor challenging traditional Jewish prohibitions of mixed-sex dancing; shifting criteria for a future husband; mass migrations from Central Europe to New York; and social changes offering new possibilities for ethnic and class mixing.

The book features six chapters grouped into two units. The first unit, chapters 1 and 2, introduces mixed-sex social dancing in literature as “a metaphor for the process of acculturation” (17). Chapter 1 begins in the late eighteenth century with historical Jewish taboos on mixed-sex dancing and how citizenship and the rise of secularism led to contrasting approaches to dance in German Jewish and Yiddish literature. Chapter 2 focuses on how Jewish people learned dancing and “how such lessons exposed young people to romantic feelings that would not have been fostered in traditional Jewish society” (45). Both chapters contrast rabbinic authorities and traditional Jewish customs with the “tricky balancing act[s]” (45) of acculturation, gendered expectations, and dance interactions between Jews and Christians.

The second unit, chapters 3 to 6, focuses on literary narratives taking place in specific types of dance spaces; these chapters are ordered chronologically and prioritize certain time-of-life experiences. Chapter 3 looks at the rural tavern in the early nineteenth century, a dance space where children learned peasant dancing and its potential social perils by observing mixed dancing. Chapter 4 explores the ballroom of the mid- and late nineteenth century, in which daughters of elites, hemmed in by the rules of etiquette, danced as a mode of courtship yet experienced “the limits of Jewish acculturation” (94). Chapter 5 investigates the wedding celebration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an especially fraught dance site where “traditional communal authorities exercised the greatest control over dancing” (122). Chapter 6 examines the dance hall in early-twentieth-century New York City, where flirting, dancing, and Jewish traditions came into contact – and conflict – with American commercialism. The epilogue continues into the mid-twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries to show how the above themes continued to resonate in the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, the film *Dirty Dancing*, and contemporary novels.

A number of threads shine through these chapters. One thread entails the perils of mixed-sex social dancing, especially when it involved Jewish women dancing with Christian men or class mixing. The literary examples in Gollance’s book are filled with tragic endings serving as cautionary tales for female readers. Such downfalls occurred in part because of the fundamentally public nature of the dancing and a “presumption of spectatorship” (12). Though especially extreme at weddings, in all the dance venues “individuals on the edges of the dance floor watch the dancers and interpret or even judge the social signals they are sending” (12). A second thread pertains to audience. Many German-language texts included in the book are *Ghettogeschiedten* (ghetto tales), written for Jewish and Christian readers, whereas the Yiddish texts about *shtetl* life had mostly Jewish readers who themselves had lived experiences of traditional Jewish villages. Given the interconnectedness of many German- and Yiddish-speaking communities and the migrations of writers and readers, many of these books circulated widely or were written about a place or time other than the writer’s own. And some texts, especially those written from outside the communities, were rife with Jewish stereotypes, whereas others exhibited more nuance. These perspectives matter because they help us to see how social dancing functions metaphorically to help process new experiences upon leaving the *shtetlekh* and Jewish struggles to acculturate when Jews were treated as outsiders.

Gollance excels at interweaving a tremendous amount of research. *It Could Lead to Dancing* covers multiple centuries, geographic locations, venues, and languages. Indeed, each facet of this interdisciplinary topic is complex, and Gollance selected highly relevant case studies that reveal her material’s nuance and scope. Gollance is in thorough command of her subject. It is an impressive feat.

A helpful component of the book is the “Appendix: List of Social and Folk Dances” (185–188), which provides a quick description of dozens of dances, including contexts, distinctive movements, and tempos. Because some dances are mentioned in numerous chapters, it is handy to have this reference rather than searching throughout the text, and it helps to keep the chapters focused and flowing.

One of the few areas for improvement lies in the use of images. These depictions are rich with details and illustrative of dancing’s vital place in Jewish culture, from Purim balls to weddings to celebrated literary characters. The issue, though, is that Gollance does not discuss the published images at all in her text, leaving a reader without a framework for how to approach them. Even a few sentences to address the images would have provided some helpful linkages, because the images are, like the literary texts discussed in the book, both reflective of their contexts and complex constructs in dialogue with those contexts.

It Could Lead to Dancing is an impressively researched book. Gollance illuminates complex material and a complex history in a clear, engaging, and compelling way. I highly recommend this book to graduate students, faculty, and independent scholars in German and Central European studies, Jewish studies, dance studies, gender studies, comparative literature, and to readers seeking an excellent model of interdisciplinary scholarship.

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Friedensvollziehung und Souveränitätswahrung. Preussen und die Folgen des Tilsiter Friedens 1807–1810

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Peace treaties involve winners and losers, but generally they are intended by all parties to pave the way back to normality. The Treaty of Tilsit, imposed by Napoleon on Prussia in 1807, was different. For, as Sven Prietzel shows in his detailed study, this “peace” settlement was designed as an instrument of control. It was less a treaty than a foundational act for an extended empire. It deprived Prussia of half its territory, but its significance lay more in conceding to the French extensive extraterritorial rights that undermined the sovereignty of the rump Hohenzollern state.

Sovereignty figures prominently in this book, as indicated in the main title. Prietzel provides a brief survey of the concept’s evolution before getting into the details of how Tilsit undermined it. Central were the financial obligations made upon Prussia, which went beyond reparation payments to include the provisioning of French occupation forces. These forces enjoyed extensive extraterritorial rights, especially along the military highway connecting the Napoleonic satellites of Saxony and the Duchy of Warsaw. The Napoleonic variety of debt-trap diplomacy not only included making demands that were exorbitantly high, and hence virtually impossible to meet, but also involved an element of intentional vagueness which could then be leveraged to achieve further encroachment. Although Prietzel does not make the claim, this kind of behaviour was typical of Napoleon, as demonstrated previously in the 1801 Concordat, to which he unilaterally appended the Organic Articles, and his “short and vague” constitution of the French state itself. The only really effective restraints