

## Biographical self-interpretations of female Austrian-Jewish emigrants after 1938

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### ABSTRACT

The so-called Anschluss was the cause of the urge to flee for Austrian Jews, as the annexation of Austria in March 1938 meant that the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg dictatorship was effectively abolished.<sup>1</sup> German troops marched into Austria on March 12, 1938 and were cheered by large sections of the local population.<sup>2</sup> The laws enacted rapidly determined the reality of Austrian Jews. Those affected were forced to flee if they were able to do so.

By analyzing sixteen oral history interviews according to a method of qualitative social research, the narratives of sixteen Jewish women who fled Vienna around 1938 are illuminated. Through their escape, their life stories tell of female experiences of repression and survival. The women see themselves as active decision-makers, so it is particularly vibrant to focus on their perspectives. They find their very own narratives to talk about the loss of family members, sexualized violence and the sheer struggle to survive. Their insights illustrate the realities of female emigration in the 1930s and follows their life paths in the decades after as most of the interviews were recorded in the women's eighties and nineties.

The topics of my dissertation shed light on emigration from a micro perspective as well as on global contexts of European migration, as the women lived in the USA and Israel for the longest time after fleeing. From summarizing it has become clear that I would like to talk about the connections between migration, gender and identity in my lecture, because my research has produced new approaches and ideas. The depth with which the women's interviews were analyzed and linked is not known to me from prior research.

### CV

**Teresa Marx** is since November 2022 a PhD student at the University of Potsdam, Germany. Her submitted dissertation is based at the Chair of Modern History (German-Jewish History) and in the final stages of evaluation. She financed her masters and PhD through the employment of the Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt Foundation in Berlin, where she was involved in research from 2021 on until December 2023. Since January 2024, she has been employed at Utrecht University under the supervision of Dr. Lorena DeVita, where she is involved in the research project "Wording Repair", which deals with German "reparations" after 1945.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaden, Die faschistische Okkupationspolitik in Österreich und der Tschechoslowakei, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Barkai, Politische Orientierungen und Krisenbewußtsein, 211.