



Save the date!

The Richard Koebner Minerva Center for Germany History Academic Events - Spring Term 2021

Links to the talks will be posted on the [Koebner Minerva Center's website](#)

Sunday, April 11, 2021, 18:30-20:00 - ZOOM EVENT <https://huji.zoom.us/j/3110022624>

- **Lecture/Talk** (in cooperation with the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History):

Nitzan Lebovic, A Temporal Turn: Rethinking German-Jewish Intellectual History with Buber, Benjamin, Arendt, and Celan.

A Temporal Turn tells the story of a group of twentieth-century Jewish intellectuals who grappled ceaselessly with concepts of time and temporality. The project brings into dialogue key thinkers, including the philosopher of religion Martin Buber, the critical theorist Walter Benjamin, the political scientist Hannah Arendt, and the poet Paul Celan, who stand at the center of our contemporary understanding of religion, critical theory, politics, and literature. All four, and many colleagues around them who identified with their approaches saw time—not space—as the key to their individual and collective experience, rejecting definitions of self based on borders, territory, or geographic/national origin.

Bio: Nitzan Lebovic received his B.A. in History and Theory of Literature from Tel Aviv University and his Ph.D. from UCLA. His first book, *The Philosophy of Life and Death: Ludwig Klages and the Rise of a Nazi Biopolitics* (2013) focuses on the circle around the Lebensphilosophie and anti-Semitic thinker Ludwig Klages. His second book, *Zionism and Melancholy: The Short Life of Israel Zarchi*, came out in Hebrew in 2015 and was published in June 2019 with the "New Jewish Philosophy and Thought" series at Indiana University Press. He is also co-editor of *The Politics of Nihilism* (2014) and of *Catastrophes: A History and Theory of an Operative Concept* (2014), and has edited special issues of *Rethinking History* (Nihilism), *Zmanim* (Religion and Power), *The New German Critique* (Political Theology), *Comparative Literature and Culture* (Complicity and Dissent), and *Political Theology* (Prophetic Politics).

Wednesday, April 21, 18:30-20:00 - Lecture/Talk (in cooperation with the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History):

Marc Volovici, Struggling with Language: Modern Jewish History and the German Language

The German language played a key role in the formation of various Jewish cultural, political and religious movements in the modern period. It came to acquire practical and symbolic significance that rendered it an integral part of the Jewish social landscape well beyond German-speaking lands. As such, German blurred the distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish languages. This lecture will present several facets of the

Jewish history of the German language, and explore methodological questions around efforts to treat language—and the German language in particular—as a political factor in modern Jewish history.

Bio: Marc Volovici is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology and the Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism at Birkbeck University of London. He received his PhD in 2017 from Princeton University. Marc's book, *German as a Jewish Problem: The Language Politics of Jewish Nationalism* (2020), investigates the multifaceted place of the German language in Jewish history and its impact on the formation of Jewish national movements. Marc served as an academic advisor and co-edited the exhibition catalogue for the award-winning exhibition 'Jews, Money, Myth', developed in collaboration with the Jewish Museum London, which ran at the Museum in 2019.

Monday, April 26, 2021, 18:30-20:00 – Book Launch Event (in cooperation with the Zalman Shazar Center)

Mirjam Zadoff, *Next Year in Marienbad. The Lost Worlds of Jewish Spa Culture*

From the last decades of the nineteenth century through the late 1930s, the West Bohemian spa towns of Carlsbad, Franzensbad, and Marienbad were fashionable destinations for visitors wishing to "take a cure". These were sociable and urbane places, settings for celebrity sightings, match-making, and stylish promenading. Among the many who traveled there, a very high

proportion were Jewish. In *Next Year in Marienbad*, Mirjam Zadoff writes the social and cultural history of Carlsbad, Franzensbad, and Marienbad as Jewish spaces. Secular and religious Jews from diverse national, cultural, and social backgrounds mingled in idyllic and often a political-seeming surroundings. Yet these same resorts were

situated in a region of growing hostile nationalisms, and they were towns that might turn virulently anti-Semitic in the off season. *Next Year in Marienbad* draws from memoirs and letters, newspapers and maps, novels and postcards to create a compelling and engaging portrait of Jewish presence and cultural production in the years between the *fin de siècle* and the Second World War.

Bio: *Mirjam Zadoff* is Director of the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism since spring 2018; from 2014 to 2019 she held the Alvin H. Rosenfeld Chair for Jewish Studies and was Associate Professor for History at Indiana University Bloomington. She was visiting faculty among others at ETH Zurich, UC Berkeley, HU Berlin and Augsburg University.

Among her publications are: *Werner Scholem. A German Life* (2018); *Next Year in Marienbad. The Lost Worlds of Jewish Spa Culture* (2012); *Scholar and Kabbalist. The Life and Work of Gershom Scholem* (2019, edited with Noam Zadoff); *Tell me about yesterday tomorrow* (forthcoming, edited with Nicolaus Schafhausen).

Book Launch event
with Prof. Mirjam Zadoff was postponed
to a later date!
Update will be published in due time

Monday, May 24, 2021, 18:30-20:00 - Lecture/Talk:

Robert Gerwarth, “An Age of Civil Wars? Europe 1912-1949”

This paper will explore some of the similarities and differences between a range of civil wars that haunted Europe between 1912 (the year the Balkan Wars began) and 1949 (the year the Greek Civil War ended). Between 1912 and 1949, Europe witnessed some 30 civil wars with an estimated minimum of six million people killed. From Finland in the North to Ireland and Spain in the West, Ukraine in the East and Greece and Italy in the South, Europe experienced a remarkable spike of internal wars, often under the cover of inter-state wars. Yet, despite the scale and geographical breadth of the phenomenon of 'internal wars', comparative histories of civil wars remain a remarkably impoverished area of historical enquiry. Historians have tended to study particular cases of internal conflict (i.e. in Ireland, Spain, or Russia) without analyzing potential connections between them beyond the fairly obvious ideological dimension in the form of international Communism and Fascism. It could be argued that our (understandable) obsession with the two world wars as the seemingly dominant conflicts of the first half of the twentieth century have blinded us to what made wars in this period 'total': the inter-connectedness of inter-state wars and civil wars.

Bio: Robert Gerwarth is Professor of Modern History and Director of the Centre for War Studies at University College Dublin. After studying history and political science in Berlin, he completed his DPhil and a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at Oxford University.

He is the author of *The Bismarck Myth* (Oxford UP, 2005) and a biography of Reinhard Heydrich (Yale UP, 2011). His third monograph, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End* was published by Penguin (UK) and FSG (US) in the autumn of 2016. He has authored several articles in leading international journals such as *Past & Present*, *The Journal of Modern History*, *Geschichte & Gesellschaft*, and *Vingtième Siècle*.

Wednesday, June 2, 2021, 14:30-16:00 - Lecture/Talk (in context of the Research Seminar of the History Department):

Till van Rahden, “Democracy: a Fragile Way of Life?”

After the Cold War ended, liberal democracy was often taken for granted. Now it is in crisis: many citizens distrust representative government and parliamentary politics, the people's parties all over Europe are losing members and votes, twitter and Instagram are crowding out public debates and civility. Across the globe, studies have appeared on the crisis of democracy. Challenging the sense of despair that has informed recent conversations, Till van Rahden suggests that instead of analysing how democracies die, it might prove more useful to explore what keeps them alive. Drawing on the history of the Federal Republic of Germany as a case study to think about democracy as a way of life, it argues that Postwar Germany's democratic miracle allows us to better understand the cultural and social foundations of democracy in public controversies, in democratic aesthetics, and in everyday life. It contends that no matter how stable a democratic government might appear to be, without democratic forms and spaces that allow for democratic experiences in everyday life it will wither away.

Bio: Till van Rahden is an associate professor at the Université de Montréal since 2006 where he holds the Canada Research Chair in German and European Studies. Before joining the Université de Montréal, he taught at the University of Chicago, the University of Cologne and the University of Bielefeld. Till van Rahden obtained his Ph.D. in History at the University of Bielefeld in 1999 and his M.A. from The Johns Hopkins University in 1993. His research focuses on European history since the Enlightenment. He is

particularly interested in the tension between the elusive promise of democratic equality and the recurrent presence of moral conflicts.

He is the author of the award-winning *Juden und andere Breslauer* published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in 2000. His most recent book is the 2019 monograph *Demokratie. Eine gefährdete Lebensform*.

Monday, June 7, 2021 18:30-20:00 - Book Launch Event (in cooperation with the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History):

Gilad Sharvit, *Therapeutics and Salvation: Freud and Schelling on Freedom* -

In his recent publication *Therapeutics and Salvation: Freud and Schelling on Freedom* Gilad Sharvit proposes a new conceptual perspective on the history of the philosophy of freedom. The book focuses on Sigmund Freud's theory of freedom, and its fundamental, yet uncharted, connection with the groundbreaking philosophy of the unconscious of F.W.J Schelling. The analysis radically challenges conventional liberal and rationalistic conceptions of freedom in psychoanalysis. The main argument of the book is that Freud formulated his theory of human nature with Schelling's basic philosophical architecture, in particular Schelling's concept of freedom, but, at the same time, subverted Schelling's search for a new theology in the end of his philosophical career. The detailed comparison of Freud's work with the philosophy of Schelling backtracks a momentous shift from Schelling's late theo-philosophy, at the endpoint of German Idealism, to the secular system of Freud, in which human reality ousted godly revelation and therapeutics replaced divine salvation. By delineating the move from Schelling's God-subject relations to Freud's human-subject relations, the book offers a new perspective on the historical evolution of German Idealism into modern secular thought.

Bio: Gilad Sharvit is an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Towson University. A scholar of modern Jewish thought, Sharvit's interests lie in Jewish philosophy, German-Jewish literature and culture, German and continental philosophy, psychoanalysis and critical theory. He completed his PhD studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the Philosophy Department and later accepted postdoctoral fellowships at University of California, Berkeley, at the Koebner Minerva Center for German History at the Hebrew University, and at Tel Aviv University.

Sharvit is the author of "Therapeutics and Salvation: Freud and Schelling on Freedom" (Magnes Press, 2021) and co-editor and contributing author of the volumes "Freud and Monotheism: The Violent Origins of Religion" with Karen Feldman (Fordham University Press, 2018) and "Canonization and Alterity: Heresy in Jewish History, Thought, and Literature" with Willi Goetschel (De Gruyter, forthcoming in 2020).

