

[German-Jewish Agency in Times of Crisis, 1914-1938](#)

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Type:

Conference

Date:

February 18, 2020 to February 19, 2020

Location:

United Kingdom

Subject Fields:

German History / Studies, Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, Jewish History / Studies

Conference

'German-Jewish Agency in Times of Crisis, 1914-1938'

18/19 February 2020, University of Sussex (Brighton, UK)

organised by

Dr David Jünger, Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies - Centre for German-Jewish Studies, University of Sussex (Brighton)

Prof Miriam Rürup, Institute for the History of the German Jews (Hamburg)

Prof Stefanie-Schüler Springorum, Centre for Research on Antisemitism (Berlin) & Academic Working Group of the Leo Baeck Institute - WAG

Dr Anna Ullrich, Center for Holocaust Studies at the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (Munich)

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German History Society (GHS)

The conference will explore how much agency German Jews or German Jewish organisations possessed during the first half of the twentieth century. Was German Jewry during this period able to pursue an independent policy vis-à-vis a hostile environment, or do we need to understand it primarily as victim? Or should we even go as far as to call the German Jews, especially in the years up to 1933, as accomplices of German crimes in the First World War and protagonists of German nationalism, racism and colonialism, as has been done in recent research work?

In recent publications on German-Jewish history during the first half of the twentieth century, many authors have raised such questions and have asked, what kind of agency was possible for German Jews in times of crisis. Some of those authors have

asserted that German Jews possessed agency to a large degree which had been neglected and denied in earlier research. At the same time, other historians have sharply criticized such new research paradigms.

These different perspectives have hardly been discussed with each other so far. Criticism and discussion take place primarily through reviews or other forms of critique. It is therefore the aim of the conference to bring together and discuss these various new approaches, perspectives and research work at one conference.

Tuesday, 18 February 2020

Venue: University of Sussex, Arts A, Room 108

09:00-09:30 Reception and Introduction

09:30-11:00 Panel 1: First World War

Chair: Anna Ullrich

- Tim Grady (University of Chester): German Jews and the First World War: A Deadly Legacy
- Sarah Panter (Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz): Beyond Marginalization: The (German-)Jewish Soldiers' Agency in Times of War, 1914-1918

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00 Panel 2: Theorising German-Jewish Agency

Chair: Gideon Reuveni

- Anthony Kauders (Keele University): Was heisst und zu welchem Ende brauchen wir agency in der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichtsschreibung?
- Lisa Silverman (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee): Jewish Difference as a Category of Analysis in German History

13:00-14:15 Lunch

14:15-16:30 Panel 3: Imperial and Weimar Germany

Chair: Miriam Rürup

- Philipp Nielsen (Sarah Lawrence College New York City): Creating a Space for

- a Jewish “new right” in Weimar Germany
- Stefan Vogt (Goethe University Frankfurt am Main): Zionism as Identity Politics: Making Sense of German Zionists’ Attempts to ‘Understand’ Antisemites
 - Martina Steer (University of Vienna): Mendelssohn in Berlin. Memory and Agency on the Verge

Evening Lecture

17:00-18:30 Evening Lecture (in conjunction with the Art History Work in Progress seminar)

Venue: Building Arts C, Lecture theatre C133

Introduction: Gideon Reuveni

Chair: Stefanie Schüler-Springorum

- Michael Berkowitz (University College London): Improvisation and agency: Between art history, photography, and public history

Wednesday, 19 February 2020

Venue: University of Sussex, Arts A, Room 108

09:15-11:30 Panel 4: Nazi Germany

Chair: David Jünger

- Gabriele Anderl (Vienna): Deceptive Security. Austrian Jews vis-à-vis Nazi Germany. 1933-1938
- Martin Jost (Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow, Leipzig): “It is not about your prestige, it is about our future.” Possibilities and Expectations of German Jews at the Évian Conference
- Kim Wünschmann (LMU Munich): Jewish Agency in the Extreme Situation: Writing about Antisemitic Terror in the Active Voice

11:30-12:00 Coffee Break

12:00-13:30 Panel 5: Culture as Agency

Chair: Stefanie Schüler-Springorum

- Gideon Reuveni (University of Sussex): The Good, the Bad and the Marketplace: Boycott, Economic Rationality and Jewish Consumers in Interwar Germany
- Joachim Schlör (University of Southampton): Photography as Agency: Self-assurance through documentation in the works of Roman Vishniac and Abraham Pisarek

13:30-14:30 Lunch

14:30-15:00 Final Discussion

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