Refugee Academics and Their Networks

Triennial Conference of the Research Centre for German & Austrian Exile Studies, Institute of Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of London (RCGAES) in conjunction with the Jahrestagung of the Gesellschaft für Exilforschung e.V (GfE)

Wednesday, 16 September – Friday, 18 September 2026 in Person at the University of London Senate House, Malet Street, WC1E 7HU

Organisers: Anthony Grenville (RCGAES), Felicitas Starr-Egger (RCGAES), Andrea Hammel (Gesellschaft für Exilforschung e.V./RCGAES)

Programme Note:
Red type denotes sessions/lectures in German

Abstracts

Wednesday, 16 Sept 2026 (Room G22)

13:30 Registration

14:00 Welcome

14:30 Chair: Charmian Brinson (RCGAES)

Anthony Grenville **(**RCGAES)
'Peaks Rising from a High Plateau': Refugee Academics and the Culture of the Refugees from Nazism in Britain
The aim of this paper is to outline how the conditions under which the (mostly Jewish) academics who fled from the Third Reich to Britain helped to determine their professional experience here and the scale of their contribution to British academic and intellectual life. Its starting point will be the strikingly high level of culture and education among the Jewish communities in German-speaking central Europe. It will then consider how the immigration system set up by the British government after 1933 favoured precisely the educated, middle-class section of German and Austrian Jewry from which the academics were mostly drawn, as well as the organisations established to assist refugee academics (e.g. the SPSL). There will follow an overview of the reception of the refugees in British universities, in both its positive and negative aspects, and a consideration of the high regard in which academic and intellectual achievement continued to be held among the refugee community in the post-war decades of its settlement in Britain (the Holocaust having ruled out for most any notion of returning to their native lands).

Gisela Holfter (University of Limerick)
German-speaking Émigré Academics in Irish Exile
The lecture will focus on Ireland as a country of exile, examining which scholars fled there, who attempted to come but was unsuccessful, the networks that played a role, and other contexts. A key hub in this context was the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS), where figures such as Erwin Schrödinger and Walter Heitler played particularly significant roles, and where other exiled academics also found a new place to work. The lecture will also address the extent to which Irish universities and scholarly organisations benefited from the refugee scholars or supported them. In addition, it will shed light on other aid organisations—both within Ireland and in Germany/Austria, the United Kingdom, and the United States—that were important for the academics who came to Ireland. Furthermore, it will explore the degree to which academic and private connections to Germany, Austria, and the United Kingdom that existed prior to 1933 proved decisive, which disciplines were particularly affected, and what long-term impact these scholars had.

Patrick Farges (Paris City University)
Rita Thalmann (Nuremberg 1926–Paris 2013) and the emergence of feminist networks in French academia.
Research on exile after 1933 has largely focused on the issue of cultural, scientific, and intellectual loss *vs*. gain: a loss for Germany (or Austria), corresponding to a gain for the host countries. This framework seems adequate to describe the disrupted trajectories of adult academics who were already established in their professions before exile. Yet how can we study the scientific and intellectual 'innovation' produced by the exile of younger people, whose socialization and education were interrupted by exile and migration? Drawing on a case study—that of the '*Germanistin*' and historian Rita Thalmann, of German-Jewish origin, a pioneer in gender studies and antiracist engagement—this paper examines the link between exile and academic innovation.
In 1985, the journal *Sexe & Race*, founded by Thalmann, listed as keywords: "anti-feminism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism." Connected to a dense network of scholars on women and gender at Paris Diderot University, individual and collective feminist research flourished in the 1980s and 1990s. *Sexe & Race* provided a forum for history of exclusion, at the intersection of women's history, minority studies, antisemitism, racism, and intersectionality. Three dimensions are salient, which still resonate today: the research network around Thalmann; the epistemological role of German Studies within French humanities; and the ideological tensions between academic and activist knowledge. An engaged scholar, Thalmann was also a keen observer of impulses from Germany, where dialogue with the Anglophone world was decisive. As a German-Jewish exile who became a professor late in life, she stood at the heart of a 'Germanist,' feminist, and antiracist research network.

16:00 Tea

16:30 Chair: Felicitas Starr-Egger (RCGAES)

Dávid Szöke (University of Nyíregyháza, Hungary)
Jewish Refugee Scholars and Iris Murdoch's Ethical Inquiry
This paper will explore the post-war social realities and ethical reconsiderations of exile in Iris Murdoch's early novels. Drawing on Murdoch's wartime work with the United

Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and her encounters with exiled Central European intellectuals, it will discuss their impact on Murdoch's moral vision on spiritual and sociocultural alienation in a post-Holocaust world. Exiled characters in her novels such as *The Flight from the Enchanter*, *The Italian Girl*, *The Time of the Angels*, *The Nice and the Good*, represent displacement as an intellectual wasteland marked by existential uprootedness, inherited trauma, failed assimilation, and moral dislocation. The analysis considers Murdoch's correspondence with Elias Canetti, Marie-Louise Motesiczky, Georg Kreisel, Arnoldo Momigliano, and Eduard Fraenkel to trace how the experience of displacement shaped her evolving conception of ethical responsibility and the moral seriousness of encountering others. The paper will also examine how German-Jewish exiles contributed to the transformation of post-war British literary and cultural landscape, introducing new modes of moral inquiry and hybrid intellectual forms.

Andrea Hammel (Aberystwyth University/Gesellschaft für Exilforschung/RCGAES) and Nick Hubble (Brunel University)

Mass Observation and the émigré influence on post-war social science research in Britain

The Austrian refugee social scientist Gertrude Wagner who had worked on the seminal study *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal* in Austria and on *Men without Work* with Hans Singer (Pilgrim Trust) was an influential contributor to the work of the social research organisation Mass Observation. In fact, she was the only trained social scientist during the early years. This paper will examine the way that Wagner and Mass Observation founder Charles Madge worked together on different studies such as the Worktown project (first phase completed in 1938) or the project on spending and saving. The latter project was used by John Maynard Keynes to underpin the 1941 budget and eventually the set-up of the post-war Welfare State in the UK. In this paper we will trace the influence of Central European social science research methodology on the development of Mass Observation and UK government policy.

Irene Messinger (University of Vienna)

Persecuted Social Workers from Vienna: Interrupted Careers and Knowledge Transfer in Exile

In interwar Vienna, Social Work was not an academic discipline; *Fürsorgerinnen* typically completed a two-year professional course. Yet several women had already earned university degrees—often as pioneers in their fields. After losing their positions in Vienna, exile disrupted their lives, and placed their knowledge in contexts where its recognition remained uncertain.

This paper traces five such trajectories. Ilse Hellmann (Psychology 1937) worked for Anna Freud in the Hampstead Nurseries and became part of her networks, as did Hedy Schwarz, a social worker and Montessori kindergarten head who also succeeded in psychoanalytic training in exile; both became members of the BPAS. Marie Haas (Psychology 1920; Law 1932) fled to India and later the US, where she worked as a teacher but could not draw on her academic background. Alice Friedmann (Zoology 1922) shifted from science to the head of a child guidance home and established herself as a psychologist in the US. Katharina Flesch (Philosophy 1926) worked as a cook under a domestic permit in the UK, before, with support from women's academic networks, earning a PhD in Social Work in 1945.

These examples highlight the ambivalent conditions of exile: while some women built

academic careers not possible in Vienna, others saw their (academic) expertise sidelined. Networks were crucial both for survival and for the transfer of knowledge.

18:00 Refreshments and Prize-Giving

Verleihung des Claus-Dieter Krohn Preises für Exilforschung 2026 an Max Beck für seine Dissertation Philosophieren im Exil. Logischer Empirismus und Kritische Theorie 1933–1945 (in Kollaboration mit der Herbert und Elsbeth Weichmann Stiftung)

Thursday, 17 Sept 2026 (Room G22)
09:15 Chair: Doerte Bischoff (University of Hamburg)

Regina Weber (Stuttgart)
Netzwerke vertriebener Germanisten in den USA
Der Eintritt in die amerikanische Germanistik (über akademische Hilfsorganisationen (*Carl Schurz-Memorial Foundation*; Blume]) oder fachspezifische Organisationen (*Modern Languages Association)* bedeutete für in Deutschland bereits etablierte Germanisten fast einen Fachwechsel - wie Alewyn erklärte: „vom Gelehrten zum Fremdsprachenlehrer“. Die Germanistik als eine Nationalphilologie führte an den amerikanischen Universitäten lange ein Randdasein, und die Klagen über die Isolierung des Fachs verwiesen auf den Mangel an beruflichen und sozialen Netzwerken. Daher suchten die an deutschen Universitäten bereits arrivierten Wissenschaftler geistige Netzwerke, die sie etwa im „anderen Deutschland“ im Exil fanden, mit Thomas Mann als Repräsentanten und Retter der *wahren* deutschen Kulturtradition (Blume). Andere suchten, rückwärtsgewandt, den geistigen Anschluß an den George-Kreis (Vordtriede) oder an den Prager Kreis Kafkas (Politzer), indem sie Kontakt mit noch lebenden Mitgliedern im Exil suchten.
Mit dem Eintritt Amerikas in den Zweiten Weltkrieg boten sich den emigrierten Germanisten neue Aufgaben im Kampf gegen Hitler-Deutschland, im Dienst der Army (Guy Stern), oder im Rahmen des *ASTP*-Programs (*Army Specialized Training Program*) als Deutschlehrer künftiger Besatzungssoldaten (Vordtriede, Alewyn).
In der Nachkriegszeit kam es zu einer stärkeren Ausdifferenzierung der amerikanischen Germanistik, nicht zuletzt durch die emigrierten Germanisten, die oftmals als Quereinsteiger ins Fach (Blume, Politzer, Guy Stern, Egon Schwarz) zur Öffnung der engen Grenzen beitrugen. Sie bildeten nun selbst Netzwerke und schufen neue Themenschwerpunkte (DDR- und BRD-Literatur, „Austriazistik“, feministische Literatur und nicht zuletzt Exilliteratur (Schwarz, Stern, Vordtriede). Austauschprogramme und internationale Kongresse im Zeichen der *Western Civilization* stabilisierten das Netzwerk der transatlantischen Beziehungen.

Dorothea McEwan (Warburg Institute, London)
‘The final goal of all historiography is understanding what it means to be human’. The Establishment of the Warburg Institute in 1933 and its contacts with the Academic Assistance Council.
Fritz Saxl, the librarian of Aby Warburg in the famous Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek in Hamburg, became after Warburg’s death in 1929 the director of this library. Forced by the political situation in Germany he and all his staff, led by Dr. Gertrud Bing, moved to

the UK in 1933. In London, the team managed to build up an internationally renowned research facility, a network of its own and a centre of contacts and assistance for many refugee academics, to wit the large correspondence and the many acts of assistance by Bing to help the refugee academics. The Warburg Institute's active collaboration with the Academic Assistance Council built networks for and of academics. Saxl's and Bing's commitment to and for refugee academics, as a part of their everyday concerns, distinguished them both and thus developed the profile of the Warburg institute as an outstanding research institute on the British academic scene. Saxl, born in Vienna in 1891, died in London in 1948, having secured the existence of the new Institute in the United Kingdom and the professional survival of many academics in the UK and the USA. My lecture will highlight the work not only of the disciplines anchored at the Warburg Institute, but also beyond, as the only institutional base in the UK and as platform for assisting unemployed academic refugees to secure them a work of place.

Felicitas Starr-Egger (RCGAES)
The Library as Refuge
The 1933 dismissal of Jewish academics in Germany and subsequently in Austria had a devastating effect not only on people's lives but also on the academic landscape as a whole. Libraries and librarians were an integral part of that landscape, yet were not automatically regarded as such by refugee support groups in Britain. Whilst the fate of important collections alongside that of eminent curators in the UK has by now been well documented, the role of UK libraries as, in some cases at least temporary, refuge warrants closer investigation. The paper will show how librarian as well as subject networks, e.g. within economics, were able to provide assistance, give examples of refugees who found short-term employment in different types of libraries but also examples of refugee librarians who were able to continue their careers.

11:15
Parallel session 1 (Room G22)
Chair: Jana Buresova (RCGAES)

Sebastian Musch (University of Osnabrück)
The Republic of Reference Letters: Community and Networking among German Refugee Classicists in the U.S.
This paper investigates the role of letters of reference in facilitating the migration and professional integration of German refugee Classicists in the United States. It centers on Werner Jaeger, the eminent classicist who, upon his arrival, was appointed professor at Harvard. As one of the most prominent refugee scholars in the humanities and a figure of considerable academic authority, Jaeger was frequently solicited to provide references by displaced colleagues as well as by relief organizations such as the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the American Committee for Christian Refugees. His evaluations addressed scholarly competence, employability, and personal character, thereby shaping the prospects of numerous refugee Classicists. Thus, Jaeger emerged as a nodal figure in what may be described as a "republic of reference letters": an informal intellectual community bound together through recommendations and assessments. Drawing on archival sources, including organizational files and Jaeger's personal

correspondence, the paper highlights both the networking strategies of refugee scholars, the ethical implications of reference writing, as well as the role of intellectual authority in shaping a transnational scholarly community during a period of forced migration.

Erika Capovilla (University of Udine)
Mapping Unseen Threads: Friderike Zweig and Refugee Intellectual Networks in the United States (1940–1971)

This paper repositions the Austrian intellectual and activist Friderike Zweig (1882–1971) – often remembered primarily as the first wife of Stefan Zweig – as a central yet largely neglected actor in the architecture of refugee intellectual networks in the United States. Emigrating to New York in 1940 and later settling in Stamford, Connecticut, Zweig emerged as a vital mediator among displaced Germanspeaking (e.g., Carl Zuckmayer, Franz Werfel) and American intellectuals and academics (e.g., Thornton Wilder, George Shuster), fostering transatlantic exchange through both personal networks and institutional commitments. Drawing on largely unpublished archival materials from Europe (Salzburg, Vienna, Marbach) and the U.S. (Yale, New York, Albany), the study offers the first comprehensive
reconstruction of the intellectual and academic refugee networks that crystallized around Zweig during her American exile. Special attention is devoted to her founding role in the Writers Service Center and the American-European Friendship Association – initiatives that served as key nodes in the wider system of refugee academic support. Rather than merely recovering a marginalized biography, this paper argues that Zweig's agency illuminates the effects of forced displacement on mid-20th century transatlantic exchange, while foregrounding the often-overlooked role of women in sustaining the material and symbolic infrastructures of exilic community.

Hadwig Kraeutler (Vienna)
Bridges, Networks, Facts – Causing Global Waves: University Women Effectively and Affectively Assisting Refugee Academics

Historic significant individuals – better, as well as lesser known (among them Winifred Cullis, Ida Smedley; Mary Ritter Beard, Rachel Carson, Margaret Mead) played key-roles in university women's organisations and thus exerted considerable influence on the life-courses of many female academic refugees from fascism. Alma S. Wittlin (1899, Lviv/UA–1991, Palo Alto/CA), a "liminal" figure within exile studies, was one of those women who had found decisive support. Her work-engagements, once in exile transgressed disciplines, languages and continents, and at times depended entirely on these networks. Tracing Wittlin's careers, punctuated by coincidental and planned connections with both these organisations and individuals, unavoidably offers significant examples and further links for these topics: new beginnings – linguistic and professional; dependency on financial and practical assistance; intellectual, methodological and disciplinary innovation;
This paper uses archival materials and literature found at The Women's Library (LSE, London) and Senate House Libraries as well as pertinent literature to present and discuss Wittlin's example in a broader and more general perspective.

11:15

Parallel session 2 (Room G26)
Chair: Sylvia Asmus (Deutsches Exilarchiv, DNB, Frankfurt/Main)

Paula Odenheimer (University of Heidelberg)
„[A]bgerissene Fäden“ und neue Verflechtungen: Käte Hamburger im Spannungsfeld schwedischer Exil- und deutscher Reintegrationsnetzwerke
Die erzwungene Emigration jüdischer Wissenschaftler*innen im Nationalsozialismus führte nicht nur zu individuellen Biografiebrüchen, sondern verlangte zugleich neue Formen akademischer Vernetzung. Käte Hamburger (1896–1992) steht exemplarisch für diese komplexen Wechselwirkungen: Ihr schwedisches Exil verbindet sie mit zentralen Akteuren der Exilliteratur und Germanistik, unter ihnen Walter A. Berendsohn (a). Trotz Hamburgers gescheiterter Versuche, in Göteborg eine akademische Anstellung zu erhalten, entstanden in diesem Umfeld Arbeiten, die wissenschaftliche Weichen stellten, etwa ihre Rilke-Studien und das spätere Standardwerk *Logik als Dichtung*. Parallel entwickelten sich konfliktreiche wie förderliche Beziehungen zu anderen Exilierten (Hannah Arendt; Thomas Mann), die wissenschaftliche wie institutionelle Resonanzräume formten (b).
Nach 1945 wurde Hamburger Teil jener Reintegrationsnetzwerke, die unter dem Vorzeichen von „Wiedergutmachung“ und institutioneller Kontinuität standen (c). Der NS-belastete Germanist Fritz Martini wurde zu einer Schlüsselfigur ihrer Rückkehr an die Universität Stuttgart, wo sie 1957 ihre langgehegten Habilitationspläne umsetzen konnte und bis 1976 als außerplanmäßige Professorin wirkte. Begonnen mit ihrem wichtigen Vortrag „Deutsche Emigrantenliteratur“ (1946) beschäftigte sich Hamburger aus Deutschland weiterhin als eine der ersten wissenschaftlich mit Texten und Autoren, die die Shoah verhandelten.
Der geplante Vortrag kann an neuere wissenschaftsbiographische Studien anknüpfen (Albrecht/Löschner 2015; Dane 2012). Er analysiert Hamburger nicht als isolierte Biografie, sondern als Knotenpunkt der hier angerissenen Netzwerke, die durch Geschlecht, jüdische Herkunft und erzwungene Migration geprägt waren. Damit zeigt der Beitrag exemplarisch, wie sich zwischen 1933 und der verlängerten Nachkriegszeit in der Germanistik hochgradig verflochtene akademische Netzwerke formten und wie exilierte Wissenschaftler*innen darin unterschiedliche Interessen, Machtverhältnisse und Erinnerungspolitiken aushandeln mussten. Hamburgers Beschreibung eines „gähnende[n] Abgrund[s]“ und „abgerissene[r] Fäden“ (Brief an Josef Körner, 12. Mai 1946) verweist auf die durch den Nationalsozialismus forcierte Diskontinuität und zugleich auf ihre Suche nach neuer wissenschaftlicher Verortung zwischen Bruch und Fortsetzung: „Ob sie [die Tradition] wieder lebendig werden kann? In anderer Weise vielleicht?“ (ebd.). Diese Perspektive eröffnet zugleich einen Zugang, die theoretischen Dimensionen von Emigration und Remigration in der germanistischen Literaturwissenschaft zu beleuchten.

Malte Spitz (Berne)
„Die Schweiz und das Floß der Medusa“ – Hans Mayers Netzwerk in Genf, Zürich und Paris
Der geplante Vortrag untersucht die intellektuellen Netzwerke, die Hans Mayers Überleben im Schweizer Exil nach seiner Flucht vor der NS-Gesetzgebung 1933 und seine entscheidende Neuorientierung vom Juristen zum Literaturwissenschaftler ermöglichten.

Mayer (1907–2001), ein Marxist jüdischer Herkunft und Absolvent der Rechtswissenschaften, fand zunächst in Genf Zuflucht und Unterstützung durch seinen Doktorvater, den Staatsrechtler Hans Kelsen. Parallel dazu spielte das Netzwerk der Kritischen Theorie eine wesentliche Rolle für seinen intellektuellen Transfer: Mayer arbeitete am Genfer Institut für Sozialforschung Max Horkheimers und hielt Vorträge am Collège de sociologie in Paris. Entscheidend für Mayers spätere Karriere als Literaturwissenschaftler war die Patronage des Schweizer Historikers und Diplomaten Carl J. Burckhardt, unter dessen Obhut er Georg Büchner studierte. Trotz prekärer Umstände, einschließlich der Internierung in Schweizer Flüchtlingslagern, verfasste Mayer sein erstes Hauptwerk Georg Büchner und seine Zeit, das seine Wendung zur Literatur markiert. Darüber hinaus zeugen Mayers literaturkritische und journalistische Tätigkeiten in Genf und Zürich sowie die im Exil gefundene Solidarität mit Kommunisten von einem vielfältigen Netzwerk, das ihm nicht nur Schutz bot, sondern auch die Basis für seine spätere Rolle als Außenseiter und Textgelehrter im Nachkriegsdeutschland legte. Der Vortrag beleuchtet, inwieweit diese Netzwerke den kulturellen und intellektuellen Transfer beförderten und Mayers ideologiekritische Position prägten.

Angelika Rieber (Frankfurt/Main)

'Haymatloz': Die Türkei als Zufluchtsort für Verfolgte aus Deutschland

„Haymatloz“, das stand in großen Lettern in den Pässen der Flüchtlinge, die während des Nationalsozialismus Zuflucht in der Türkei suchten. Etwa 1 000 Wissenschaftler, Künstler und Politiker kamen auf Einladung der türkischen Regierung in die Türkei und hinterließen dort bis heute sichtbare Spuren. Dass die Türkei während des Nationalsozialismus Zufluchtsland für Menschen war, die aus „rassischen“ oder politischen Gründen in Deutschland verfolgt wurden und fliehen mussten, ist relativ unbekannt, ebenso die beachtlichen Beiträge, die diese Wissenschaftler für die Modernisierung der Türkei geleistet haben. Und umgekehrt brachten diejenigen, die nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg wieder zurück nach Deutschland kamen, aus der Türkei einen reichen Schatz von Erfahrungen mit.

Das Netzwerk von Philipp Schwartz verschaffte vielen Wissenschaftlern die Möglichkeit, in der Türkei in ihrem Beruf tätig zu sein und sich am Aufbau der Universitäten zu beteiligen. Paul Hindemith vermittelte als Berater der türkischen Regierung zahlreiche Musiker in die Türkei.

Auch die Nachkriegszeit soll in den Blick genommen werden. Welche Motive spielten eine Rolle weiterzuwandern, nach Deutschland zurückzukehren oder in der Türkei zu bleiben? Wie hat sich die Zeit in der Türkei auf die Karriere der Wissenschaftler und Musiker ausgewirkt und mit welchen Problemen und Herausforderungen waren sie dort konfrontiert? Mit welchen Widerständen hatten sie bei ihrer Rückkehr nach Deutschland zu kämpfen und wie konnten sie die im Exil gewonnen Erfahrungen in die Nachkriegsgesellschaft in Deutschland einbringen?

Anhand ausgewählter Biografien sollen die Anlässe und Umstände der Flucht, die Rolle dieser Wissenschaftler (Gleissberg und Reuter) und Musiker (Zuckmayer und Amar) für die Entwicklung der Universitäten in der Türkei und ihre weitere Entwicklung in der Nachkriegszeit aufgezeigt werden.

12.45 Lunch (own arrangements)

14:00
Parallel session 3 (Room G22)
Chair: Jennifer Taylor (RCGAES)

Niccola Shearman (Courtauld Institute, London)
'Gestern war eine rather busy day' art historian Erika Tietze-Conrat in exile
Written during a research visit to London, this diary entry from June 1937 is indicative of Erika Tietze-Conrat's (1883-1958) adaptability in face of the urgent situation in which she and her husband Hans Tietze found themselves. The first female PhD in art history at the University of Vienna (1905), Tietze-Conrat's career as a lecturer and author, with concerns equally in the Italian and Austrian Baroque and in contemporary art of progressive Viennese circles, was interrupted in the late 1930s just at the point where – as mother of four children – she was gaining in independence and professional promise. On emigration to the USA, she and Hans were kept afloat by brief academic appointments, publishing contracts and the sale to MoMA of the famous double portrait by Oskar Kokoschaka (1909). Only in 1954 did she finally receive a position at Columbia University, taking over her husband's seminar in the Venetian Renaissance.
Building on published research by Austrian academics and on primary materials in Vienna and New York, this paper will examine the experience in exile of this important scholar. How did her background in the methods of the 'Vienna School' influence research practices in her adopted home and what connections were there to other émigré scholars both in the USA and the UK? How far was the interaction with contemporary artists, publishers and dealers in exile a source of mutual inspiration? Such questions will shed light on a determined individual and her representative experience in the expansion of a discipline effected by National Socialist policies in Europe.

Ulrik Runeberg (Restaurierungszentrum Düsseldorf [RED])
The professional career of the Viennese artist, art expert and painting conservator Franz Howanietz (1897-1972) during his self-imposed exile in Puerto Rico and New York in the course of the 1930´s and 1950´s
This contribution aims to trace the exceptional and unusual biography of the Viennese artist, painting restorer and art historian Franz Howanietz (1897-1972).
In 1933, he and his Puerto Rican wife Muna Lee left Vienna due to worsening political and sociological circumstances and settled in San Juan, the capital of the antillean island and U.S. territory Puerto Rico.
At the University of Puerto Rico, Howanietz soon was employed to teach art theory. As painting conservator, he became entrusted to restore the paintings for the first institutional museum, the Museo de Historia, Antropologia y Arte, which was founded in 1936. And he also was able to continue his career as successful artist. Howanietz interlinked different cultural fields to teach academic students, fellow artists and art historians in a wholistic way, and raised the standard of art conservation.
Another legacy had been the publication of discourses about painting conservation, art theory and ethics for a broad public, especially in newspapers and magazines, which was quite unusual for that time. Howanietz significantly was promoted and supported by his wife Muna Lee, director for foreign affairs at the University of Puerto Rico at that time, and poetical writer.

In 1941, however, Howanietz was interned as foreign enemy until the end of the war. In 1945, he returned to Vienna and re-activated his academic and professional network. During the mid-1950´s, Howanietz decided to emigrate again, and settled in New York where he took up a position as paintings restorer at the Kress Foundation.
Partially, the curriculum and career of Howanietz is consistent to the life and fate of contemporary emigree artists, art historians and conservators from central Europe who were forced into exile. On the other hand, his self-imposed exile especially during the 1930s may be described as off the beaten track. The focus on his vitae allows insights into the history of conservation of that time, as well as parallelisms and intersections which reflect contemporary developments in this field

14:00
Parallel session 4 (Room G26)
Chair: Kerstin Schoor (European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder)

Eva Waibel und Birgit Peter (University of Vienna)
Vertriebene Theaterforschende im Exil. Netzwerke, Kontexte und Konsequenzen
Das internationale Forschungsprojekt „History of Theatre Studies. Swiss/Austrian Networks and Contexts“ (HoTS) widmet sich bisher übersehenen, verdrängten und vergessenen Aspekten der theaterwissenschaftlichen Fachgeschichte. Ausgangspunkt bildet der Aufstieg des Fachs in den 1930er/1940er Jahren in NS-Deutschland. Dies hat bis heute zur Folge, dass vor allem NS-Profiteur:innen erinnert und kanonisiert werden, während im NS exkludierte und vertriebene Theaterforschende in Vergessenheit geraten. Diese bisher unberücksichtigten Akteur:innen werden mittels kritischer Fachgeschichtsschreibung, Exilforschung und Geschichte der Exilforschung, Holocaust Studies, Memory Studies sowie Digital Humanities recherchiert. Ihre Sichtbarkeit wird im Forschungsprojekt durch Disseminationsstrategien, wie Vorträge und Publikationen, und durch die im Projekt entwickelte Forschungsplattform (https://hots.univie.ac.at/) sichergestellt.
Im Zentrum unseres Vortrags stehen sowohl Organisationen, welche Theaterforschende bei der Flucht und der Suche nach Überlebensmöglichkeiten unterstützten (z.B. Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, International Federation of University Women) als auch Einzelpersonen (z.B. Heinrich Schnitzler, Alois Maria Nagler, Lotte Labus, Richard Alewyn, Franz Rapp). Über vertiefte biografische Forschung spüren wir auf, welche Personen und Institutionen im Exil Netzwerke bildeten bzw. in diese integriert wurden. Nach 1945 fand ein Teil dieser exkludierten Theaterforschenden Aufnahme in sich neuformierende internationale Fachnetzwerke (z.B. International Theatre Institute, Société Internationale des Bibliothèques et Collections des Arts du Spectacle, International Federation for Theatre Research). Dort trafen Geflüchtete wie Marlis Thiersch, Alois Maria Nagler und Heinrich Schnitzler auf hoch belastete NS-Profiteur:innen wie Heinz Kindermann, Hans Knudsen, Carl Niessen und Margret Dietrich. In den 1960er Jahren wiesen die Theaterwissenschaftlerin Marta Mierendorff, die Pionierin der Exilforschung, der geflüchtete Regisseur Walter Wicclair sowie Joseph Wulf, Auschwitz-Überlebender und Begründer der Holocaust Studies, vehement auf die Verantwortung der NS-Theaterwissenschaft am Holocaust hin. Vor diesem Hintergrund stellt sich die Frage, welche Bedeutung diese Konstellation von NS-Karrierist:innen und

Verfolgten sowohl für das Zwischenmenschliche als auch für definitorische Fragen des Faches und für Forschungskonzeptionen hatte.
Unser Beitrag über vertriebene Theaterforschende im Exil erarbeitet folgende Aspekte: Welche Institutionen, Universitäten und Fachbereiche halfen geflüchteten Theaterforschenden im Exilland, und auf welche Weise taten sie dies? Wie beeinflussten die geflüchteten Forschenden die Entwicklung der Disziplinen im jeweiligen Exilland? Welche Bedeutung hatten Geflüchtete für die Internationalisierung im Postnazismus? Der Vortrag gliedert sich in drei Teilbereiche, die inhaltlich und methodisch miteinander verknüpft sind:
I.) individuelle und institutionelle Netzwerke geflüchteter Theaterforschender zwischen Theaterpraxis und -theorie.
II.) Auswirkungen von Flucht und Vertreibung auf die Fachdisziplin am Beispiel der Exilländer USA, Australien, Puerto Rico u.a.
III.) Netzwerke und die Internationalisierung der Disziplin im Postnazismus.

Irene Nawrocka and Daniela Angetter-Pfeiffer (Austrian Academy of Sciences)
Die wissenschaftlichen Netzwerke der Lise Meitner im schwedischen Exil
Die österreichische Physikerin Lise Meitner (Wien, 1878 – Cambridge, 1968) und ihr deutscher Kollege Otto Hahn (1879 – 1968) arbeiteten seit 1912 gemeinsam am Kaiser Wilhelm Institut in Berlin. Die enge und auch auf persönlicher Freundschaft basierende fruchtbare Zusammenarbeit fand ein weitgehendes Ende, als Meitner nach dem „Anschluss“ Österreichs 1938 wegen ihrer jüdischen Herkunft ihre zu diesem Zeitpunkt bereits unbezahlte Arbeit aufgeben musste, um zu flüchten. Mit Hilfe von Manne Siegbahn gelangte sie nach Schweden und war in Stockholm am Nobelinstitut für Physik bei Siegbahn tätig. Über ihren ebenfalls emigrierten Neffen, den Physiker Otto Robert Frisch, hielt sie Verbindung zu Niels Bohr in Kopenhagen. Hahn hingegen konnte mit Fritz Straßmann die gemeinsamen Forschungen in Berlin fortsetzen.
Hahn wurde 1943 Mitglied der Königlichen Wissenschaftsakademie in Stockholm und erhielt den Nobelpreis für Chemie 1944 (zugesprochen 1945). Lise Meitner allerdings wurde erst 1945 in die schwedische Wissenschaftsakademie gewählt (und 1948 als erste Frau zum Mitglied der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften ernannt). War Meitners neuer Arbeitsplatz in Stockholm von Vorteil, oder geriet sie stattdessen in eine Isolation, die schließlich dazu führte, dass allein Hahn von dieser Akademie mit dem Nobelpreis ausgezeichnet wurde?
Anhand persönlicher publizierter sowie vor allem unpublizierter Korrespondenzen (z. B. der Meitners mit der schwedischen Physikerin Eva von Bahr) sowie neu zu beleuchtender Archivmaterialien wird der Frage nachgegangen, wie Meitners und Hahns jeweilige Netzwerke – auch im Zusammenhang mit dem Nobelpreis – aussahen. Im Fokus stehen deren Bedeutung sowie die Kontinuitäten, Brüche bzw. auch der Neuaufbau solcher nach 1933/1938.

Burcu Dogramaci (University of Munich)
In die Sterne sehen. Der exilierte Astrophysiker Erwin Finlay Freundlich und seine Observatorien in Potsdam, Istanbul und St. Andrews
Obgleich ein Mondkrater und ein Asteroid nach dem Astrophysiker Erwin Finlay Freundlich benannt wurden und er in engem Austausch mit Albert Einstein wirkte, existieren kaum Forschungen zu Freundlich. Dabei ist seine Arbeit auch aus interdisziplinärer Perspektive und für die Exilforschung von besonderem Interesse:

Erwin Finlay Freundlich war der Spiritus Rector des 1920–22 auf dem Telegraphenberg in Potsdam errichteten Einsteinturms. Der Astrophysiker setzte sich maßgeblich für die Beauftragung von Erich Mendelsohn ein, der damit seine Laufbahn als Architekt begann. Mit dem Einstein-Institut suchte Erwin Finlay Freundlich, Einsteins Relativitätstheorie experimentell zu überprüfen. Alle drei – Freundlich, Einstein und Mendelsohn – mussten nach 1933 aufgrund ihrer jüdischen Herkunft ins Exil gehen. Erwin Finlay Freundlich wurde Professor für Astrophysik an der Universität Istanbul, wo er erneut den Bau eines Observatoriums initiierte und dafür mit Arif Hikmet Holtay wieder einen jungen Architekten gewann. Auch an seiner letzten Exilstation im schottischen St. Andrews initiierte Freundlich 1940 den Bau einer Sternwarte.
Mein Vortrag wertet erstmals Material aus, das ich an den verschiedenen Standorten zusammengetragen habe. Im Blick stehen die interdisziplinären und internationalen Netzwerke Freundlichs, der wiederholt zum fachlichen, institutionellen und infrastrukturellen Aufbau der Disziplin an seinen (Exil-)Orten beitrug. Zudem war er mindestens in Potsdam und Istanbul ein Impulsgeber für moderne Architektur. Insofern wird in meinem Vortrag Wissenschaft im Exil nach 1933 als initiierend, interdisziplinär aufgeschlossen und wortwörtlich „aufbauend“ verstanden – im Horizont von Flucht, Exil und erzwungenem beruflichen Neubeginn.

16:15 Tea / Gesellschaft für Exilforschung Annual General Meeting (16:30–17:30)

18:00 Chancellor’s Hall (1st floor)
Gala Concert with members of the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna, presented by the Austrian Cultural Forum

19:45 Reception

Friday, 18 Sept 2026 (Room G22)

09:30 Chair: Andrea Hammel (GfE/RGAES)

Alberto Orlando (University of Trento)
When International Networks and Fascist Sympathy Failed to Prevent Jewish Persecution: The Transnational Trajectory of Curt Sigmar Gutkind between Germany, Italy, France and the UK
In the context of German-Italian academic relations following the rise of fascism and national socialism – culminating in the 1938 Cultural Agreement and the 1939 Pact of Steel – transnational scholarly networks revealed their contradictions amid increasing political entanglement. This paper explores the case of Curt Sigmar Gutkind (1896–1940), a German- Jewish Romanist and early supporter of Italian Fascism, whose fragmented academic career illustrates the limits of cross-border intellectual solidarity. From his position as Lektor of German in Florence to his pioneering role in founding in Mannheim the first modern interpreter training institute, Gutkind's trajectory was shaped by institutional and personal networks linking Germany and Italy, involving figures such as Giorgio Pasquali, Giulio Bertoni, Cesare Foligno, Luigi Russo, and Mussolini himself. Despite these connections and the publication of a pro -fascist volume on Mussolini, Gutkind was dismissed from Heidelberg University in 1933 under Nazi ra cial laws and later excluded from Italian academia as a Jew and a foreigner. After relocating to France and the UK, he engaged with transnational aid networks such as HICEM and the Academic Assistance Council but was unable to secure a stable academic position in the country he still considered his "new homeland": Mussolini's Italy. Drawing on personal documents and previously unpublished archival materials, this paper aims to demonstrate how refugee scholars navigated shifting ideological landscapes and how intellectual networks were ultimately undermined by bureaucracy, exclusion, and racial policy.

Sebastiano Gubian (University of Hamburg)
German and Austrian musicologists in Florence (1933-1945)
As a consequence of the persecutions in Germany (from 1933) and Austria (from 1938), an interesting phenomenon of cultural mobility towards fascist Italy involved not only musicians, composers, and conductors, but also musicologists. Florence became one of the most sought-after destinations, thanks to the presence of an important German colony dating back to the time of the *Granducato di Toscana*, the German institutions already established in the past (such as the *Kunsthistorisches Institut, Villa Romana,* the *Deutsche Schule*...), and the huge number of musical sources (from the 16th to the 18th century) still largely unexplored in many libraries.
This contribution focuses on the integration into Florentine society of both exiled and non-exiled scholars, who also played a crucial role in putting artists in touch with theatres and institutions. The activities of Jewish musicologists such as Alfred Einstein and Ludwig Landshoff (connected to the circle of Baron Luigi Franchetti and forced into remigration in 1938) and the circle around composer and music critic Gisella Selden-Goth will be discussed. The complexity of this phenomenon is proved by the contemporaneous presence of regime-loyal intellectuals like Dr. Bernhard Paumgartner, who – though not a victim of racial persecution – settled in Florence after being removed

from the direction of the *Mozarteum* in Salzburg, collaborating with the Florentine section of the *Deutsche Akademie*. The aim is to outline the different paths taken by music scholars, their interaction with both German and Italian institutions and to understand the extent of their influence on the development of Italian musicology in the years that followed.

Andrea Acle-Kreysing (University of Heidelberg)
Lives in Exile, Knowledge in Action: Refugee Academics in Mexico and Argentina
Latin America is often overlooked as a destination for refugee scholars fleeing fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. This paper examines two institutions that became crucial sites of intellectual refuge: the *Universidad Obrera de México* (Workers' University of Mexico, UOM; 1936) and the *Colegio Libre de Estudios Superiores* (Free College of Higher Studies, CLES; 1930) in Buenos Aires. At the UOM, under labour leader Vicente Lombardo Toledano, German-speaking exiles such as Alfons Goldschmidt and László Radványi developed Marxist pedagogy closely tied to the labour movement and pro-Soviet networks. In Argentina, under critic Roberto Giusti and politician Arturo Frondizi, the CLES operated outside official universities, offering a liberal-democratic forum that welcomed Italian-Jewish exiles like Rodolfo Mondolfo and Renato Treves, alongside German-speaking voices including Felix Weil and Alfredo Dang.
The two institutions emerged in contrasting circumstances: in Mexico, the government was relatively receptive to left-wing exiles, though placements still relied on private initiatives; in Argentina, restrictive immigration laws coexisted with a tradition of recruiting foreign scholars, creating a complex landscape of opportunity and constraint. Through their activities and publications, the UOM and CLES show how exile knowledge in the humanities and social sciences was re-signified in accordance with Latin America's political and cultural contexts.

11:00 Coffee

11:30 Chair: Bea Lewkowicz (AJR Refugee Voices Testimony Archive/RCGAES)

Sebastian Willert (Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture, Leipzig)
A Network of Solidarity in the Middle East? Charity Organizations and German-Jewish Refugee Academics in Turkey and Palestine.
In early spring 1933, four German-Jewish scholars met in Zurich to establish a solidarity-based selfhelp organization, which led to the formation of the 'Notgemeinschaft Deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland' (Emergency Committee of German Scholars Abroad). This group aimed to assist academics fleeing persecution in Nazi Germany. Turkey became a refuge for approximately 1,000 German academics persecuted by the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1938. The Academic Assistance Council (later: Society for the Protection of Science and Learning) simultaneously established ties to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and encouraged displaced scholars to migrate to Palestine. However, the networks involved in processing refugee scholars to Turkey and Palestine differ. In Turkey, refugee scholars acted as arrival brokers to help secure positions for other refugee academics. They worked on good relations with Turkish government circles and established a solidarity-based self-help initiative and fund. Meanwhile, the

AAC/SPSL negotiated directly with the Hebrew University and the British colonial administration of Mandate Palestine.
In a comparative approach, this paper examines the organizations, institutions, and individuals that supported refugee academics in migrating to Turkey and Palestine. It focuses on the conditions surrounding their arrival in host cities and institutions, exploring the agency of the scholars and their collaborative strategies, as well as the implications for refugee support networks in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Finja Zemke (University of Hamburg) and Till Greite (ILCS, University of London)
H. G. Adler and his manifolded notion of community
As part of a research stay at the *Research Centre for German & Austrian Exile Studies* from February until May 2026 I'll work H. G. Adlers exile in London and explore the question of how he reflects on his exile situation on the one hand, which topics are of particular concern to him in public on the other hand, and how these are processed in his literary texts. Through his internment in the Nazi camp Theresienstadt during the National Socialist era and his flight into exile in the post-war period, Adler had to experience various forms of community (under coercion and in exile) and tried to describe them beyond his personal experience. One of his important works is his study *Theresienstadt 1941–1945. Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft* (1955), written in London. What is particularly apparent about Adler's approach is his combination of personal experience and scientific findings. In exile, he eludes any (exile) community and affiliation, insofar as he didn't flee from Nazi Germany to Great Britain in the 1930s like other Jewish writers. Based on his special experience of Shoah and exile, I'll investigate his literary and academic debates in and with his host country. I would be very pleased to be able to present research results in the context of the conference, especially his reflections on communities with a special focus on values such as freedom and humanity.

Barbara Seidl-Reutz (Vienna)
Hidden Itineraries: Austrian Female Scholars in Exile
This paper examines the "hidden itineraries" of Austrian female scholars displaced by fascism, antisemitism, and war in the 1930s and 1940s. While the exile of Austrian intellectuals has been widely studied, women's experiences remain underrepresented. By focusing on Elise Richter, Marie Jahoda, and Grete Mostny, the paper reconstructs trajectories that were fragmented, redirected, or erased under the pressures of persecution and displacement.
The concept of "hidden itineraries" is used as both method and metaphor. It highlights the ways in which women's academic paths were shaped by structural exclusion, precarious living conditions, and fragile or shifting networks. Richter, the first woman to habilitate in Austria, was stripped of her position after 1938 and ultimately murdered in Theresienstadt, her scholarly contributions left incomplete. Jahoda, imprisoned for her political activism, escaped to the United Kingdom and later the United States. Socialist and émigré networks offered her opportunities, yet she still faced long periods of insecure and project-based employment before becoming an influential figure in social psychology.
Mostny, expelled from Vienna and completing her doctorate in Brussels, emigrated to Chile in 1939. With the help of local museum networks, she obtained an assistant post

and gradually rebuilt her career, eventually rising to prominence as a leading Egyptologist and museum director.
Foregrounding these varied trajectories challenges dominant exile narratives that emphasize continuity and success; instead, it underscores the precarious negotiations through which intellectual life was reshaped across borders.

13:00 Concluding Address: Felicitas Starr-Egger (RCGAES)

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