

BERLIN PROGRAM
for Advanced German & European Studies

German Studies Association 

Friedrich
Meinecke
Institut

Guest Lecture

Atina Grossmann (The Cooper Union)

German Jews fleeing Nazi Persecution: Trauma, Privilege, and Adventure in the “Orient”

Moderator: Paul Nolte (FU Berlin)

ATINA GROSSMANN is Professor of History in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art where she teaches Modern German and European History and Gender Studies. Professor Grossmann is a specialist in German-Jewish history, Holocaust Studies and women's and gender history. Her current research focuses on Jewish refugees from National Socialism in Iran, India, and Central Asia. Her publications have shaped debates, among them *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* (together with Mark Edele and Sheila Fitzpatrick in 2017), *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949* (2007) and *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920–1950* (1995). She is the recipient of prestigious awards, e.g. the George L. Mosse Prize of the American and the Fraenkel Prize in Contemporary History from the Wiener Library and has served on the Berlin Program academic advisory committee (2019–2022).

PAUL NOLTE is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the Freie Universität Berlin. His research interests in recent years have centered on transformations of democracy, on public intellectuals, the historiography in the Federal Republic as well as transatlantic history. As chair of the program's Academic Advisory Committee Professor Nolte advises fellows and regularly heads the research colloquium.

This lecture is a joint event by the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies and the Colloquium zur Zeitgeschichte at the Friedrich Meinecke Institute.

This lecture examines the intensely ambivalent and paradoxical experiences, sensibilities, and emotions of Jews who found refuge in Iran after 1933. In flight from homelands that had condemned them as racially inferior they carried with them a fraught sense of cultural superiority as well as a cosmopolitan curiosity about the multicultural worlds they encountered while living in “global transit.”

Drawing on archival sources and an extensive collection of family memorabilia, photographs, and correspondence, the talk probes refugees' understanding of their own unstable position, the changing geopolitical situation, their encounters with a diverse local population, their work with Jewish relief agencies and the allied war effort, as well as emerging revelations about the destruction of European Jewry. It draws attention to the global circulation of letters and information, as mail arrives in Tehran from German Jews scattered in new refugee sites from Shanghai to Tel Aviv, Connecticut to California, and even from family trapped in Nazi Germany. The talk also highlights the significance of gender and age and the challenges of narrating a family story folded into a larger historical “remapping” of war, Holocaust, empire, and displacement.



Atina Grossmann's parents
in the Iranian desert, 1939

DATE

Wed, April, 27, 2022, 4–6 PM (CEST)
Online event held via Webex

LANGUAGE

English

REGISTRATION

Send an email to
[bprogram\[at\]zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:bprogram[at]zedat.fu-berlin.de)
to receive access to the event

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