

Amsterdam German Studies Lecture: Thomas Mergel

Weimar between East and West. Transnationalizing the history of Germany's first democracy

Activiteit van Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam

Datum: donderdag 8 december 2022 om 17:00 uur tot 18:30 uur

Locatie: SPUI25, Spui 25, Amsterdam

Informatie: De lezing is in het Engels.

Toegang: Toegang gratis. Aanmelden bij SPUI25:

https://spui25.nl/programma/weimar-between-east-and-west/make_reservation

Op 8 december spreekt historicus Thomas Mergel in Amsterdam over de Weimarrepubliek. Lange tijd is onderzoek naar de Weimarrepubliek impliciet uitgegaan van een vergelijking met de West-Europese (liberale) democratie. Recenter onderzoek benadrukt dat de Weimarrepubliek ook en zelfs vooral in de context van Midden- en Oost-Europese democratieën begrepen moet worden. Mergel pleit in zijn lezing voor een veel breder, transnationaal perspectief op de Weimarrepubliek.

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Our narratives of the Weimar Republic have long been determined by a container view of German history. The successes and failures of Weimar's political culture were primarily told from an endogenous perspective. When looking outward, most eyes turned to 'the West' as an implicit role model and orientation foil. In many respects, the Cold War context supported this view, pursuing normative ideas of (liberal) democracy and explaining the failure of Weimar from this angle. More recent scholarship, however, has emphasized that the Weimar Republic should be integrated into a much broader perspective, including long-standing German relations with Eastern Europe and even beyond the continent. This applies to economic and diplomatic relations as well as ideas of democracy and society. Moreover, the self-image of a middle position between East and West and the self-ascribed role of a hegemonic player in the East and Southeast of Europe informed historical experiences of many German contemporaries. The lecture thus

argues for a more transnational perspective on the Weimar Republic.

Thomas Mergel (1960) is Professor of European History of the Twentieth Century at the Humboldt University of Berlin. He worked, among other places, in Bochum, Bielefeld, Harvard, Chicago and Prague. Mergel is regarded as one of the great innovators of political cultural history.

Comments by dr. Moritz Föllmer (UvA History), moderation by dr. Krijn Thijs (Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam)

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