

Amsterdam German Studies Lecture | Stephan Malinowski

The Hohenzollern Debate: The German Royal Family and the Nazis

Veranstaltung des Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam

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https://spui25.nl/programma/the-hohenzollern-debate/make_reservation

In Duitsland bestaat een fel debat over de banden tussen de oude koninklijke familie Hohenzollern en de nazi's, nadat de Hohenzollern restitutie van de staat eisten voor de Sovjet-ontevingen van hun eigendommen na 1945. Om goedkeuring te krijgen voor hun claim, moet de familie Hohenzollern bewijzen dat hun voorouders de nazi's niet substantieel steunden bij hun machtsovername. In de daarop volgende juridische procedures en publieke discussie over deze kwestie zijn historici veelgevraagde experts en belangrijke getuigen geworden, waaronder Stephan Malinowski.

In Germany, a fierce debate has recently developed on the links between the old royal family Hohenzollern and the Nazis. This issue was raised after the Hohenzollern had claimed restitution from the state for the Soviet expropriations of their property after 1945. In order to get approval for its claim, the Hohenzollern family has to prove that their ancestors did not substantially support the Nazis in their rise to power. In the ensuing legal proceedings and public discussion over this issue historians have become sought-after experts and important witnesses. Stephan Malinowski is one of them.

In his book, winner of the prestigious 2022 Deutscher Sachbuchpreis (German non-fiction award), Malinowski analyses the symbolic-political alliance of the Hohenzollern and the Nazis. By analyzing the family's life in Weimar Germany and beyond he shows how it was actively involved in conservative and right-wing circles hostile to the Weimar democracy. Even before the book came out, Malinowski presented extensive evidence of the Hohenzollern family's support for

the National Socialists.

For some of his statements in the media, he has since 2015 been under legal attack by the current 'head of the house' Hohenzollern, who has also brought dozens of similar complaints against newspapers, radio stations, politicians and historians. The Hohenzollern aim to defend the image, carefully shaped in the past ten years, of the family's political role as insignificant. In line with this, the last Crown Prince has even been portrayed as an active opponent of National Socialism. A juridical clarification of the Hohenzollerns' material claims before the court in Potsdam, which will have to be based on the historians' findings, is still pending. The next hearing will take place in the spring of 2023.

[Stephan Malinowski](#) studied and taught history in Berlin, France, Italy, the USA, and Ireland. Since 2012, he is a professor for European history at the University of Edinburgh. His previous book *Nazis and Nobles* received various awards. The expert opinion, which he prepared on behalf of the state of Brandenburg in 2014, plays an important role in the discussion about the restitution claims asserted by the "head of the house" of Hohenzollern.

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