

Refugees in Global Transit: Encounters, Knowledge, and Coping Strategies in a Disrupted World, 1930s–50s

Conference, February 13 & 14, 2025, Mumbai



Organized by Simone Lässig (German Historical Institute Washington), Sebastian Schwecke (Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies, Delhi), and Swen Steinberg (Queen's University, Kingston) in collaboration with Christoph K. Neumann (Orient Institut Istanbul), Maria Framke (University of Erfurt), and Jens Hanssen (Orient Institut Beirut)



Max Weber Forum
FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

Max Weber
Stiftung

.....

Program

Thursday, February 13, 2025

8:30 am – 9:00 am Registration / Coffee and pastries

9:00 – 9:30 am **Welcome**

9:30 – 10:30 am **Panel 1: Interactions and Illusions**

Refugee Political Thought in Transit: The Interaction between Hindu Bengalis and Jewish Exiles in British Bengal, 1930s–40s
Arnab Dutta (University of Groningen)

End of Utopia: The Photographic Archive of a Disillusioned Refugee in Early Israel
Julia Hauser (University of Kassel)

10:30–11:00 am **Coffee Break**

11:00 am – 12:00 pm **Panel 2: Reimagination and Remembrance**

Echoes Across Empires: Caribbean Refuge and the Reimagining of Holocaust Histories
Rosa de Jong (University of Amsterdam)

At Home in Transit: German–Jewish Refugees Remember Harbin, Manchuria, 1938–1949
Susanne Hillman (San Diego State University)

12:00 – 1:00 pm **Lunch Break**

1:00–2:30 pm **Panel 3: Negotiating Precarity: German, Polish and Kazakh Refugees in colonial South Asia 1939–1950**

Humanitarianism and the Limits of Sovereignty: Polish Refugees in Kolhapur
Pragya Kaul (University of Michigan)

Humanitarianism in Action: Kazakh refugees in Bhopal
Antara Datta (Royal Holloway, University of London)

Barbed-Wire Humanitarianism? : The Internment of German Civilians in Second World War India (1939–1946)
Suchitan Das (University of Oxford)

- 2:30 – 3:00 pm **Coffee Break**
- 3:00 – 4:00 pm **Panel 4: Refugees, Hosts and Settlers: The Levant from 1939 to 1951**
- 'Nothing to do but speculate about the future:' Jewish Refugees in the Beirut Quarantine, 1939
Mohamad El Chamaa (American University of Beirut)
- Civic Friendship, Hospitality and Repatriation in 1940s Palestine
Jens Hanssen (Orient Institut, Beirut)

4:00 – 6:00 pm **Break**

6:00 – 8:00 pm **Keynote: Atina Grossmann (Cooper Union, New York)**
followed by a small reception

Friday, February 14, 2025

- 9:00 – 10:30 am **Panel 5: Shalom and Hello Bombay: German Refugees and Migrant Histories of Knowledge in an Indian Metropolis**
- Ernest Shaffer's discovery of India: Navigating networks and accumulating expertise in the life of a refugee
Maria Framke (University of Erfurt)
- German Camera for an Islamicate Vision: Josef Wirsching, Kamal Amrohi, and the Making of Visual Affect in Bombay Cinema
Razak Khan (University of Göttingen)
- "These guys don't know anything". Ambivalences from a German aristocratic labour emigrant in Bombay
Jörg Zedler (University of Regensburg / LMU München)

10:30 – 11:00 am **Coffee Break**

- 11:00 am – 12:00 pm **Panel 6: Internationalism and Anticolonialism between the Local and the Global**
- "Global Transit" in a Colonized World: Internationalism in Colonial Bombay
Ninad Pandit (The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art)
- Indian and Indonesian Anticolonialism in Transit: Wartime Colonial Subalterns in an Indian Ocean Anticolonial Moment, 1945–47

Naina Manjrekar (IIT Bombay)

12:00 -12:30 pm **Final discussion**

12:30 – 1:30 pm Lunch Break

1:30 – 5:00 pm **Excursion**

6:00 Conference Dinner

Event **Website:**

<https://www.ghi-dc.org/events/event/date/refugees-in-global-transit-encounters-knowledge-and-coping-strategies-in-a-disrupted-world-1930s-50s>

About **In Global Transit:**

Website: <https://transit.hypotheses.org/>
<https://www.ghi-dc.org/research/history-of-migration/in-global-transit>

Photo Credit: Polish refugee camp operated in 1943 by the Red Cross in Tehran, Iran, after the evacuation from the Soviet captivity in Siberia, *Source:* United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division