

WAG Scholars' Working Group on German Rabbis after 1933 at LMU München

Personal details

Dr. David Jünger
University of Rostock, Germany
juenger.david@yahoo.de

Statement of interest

Currently, I am preparing a book manuscript on the life and times of Rabbi Joachim Prinz as a political biography. Thus, the WAG Scholars' Working Group on German Rabbis after 1933 at LMU München gives me the opportunity to share my expertise on Prinz and other rabbis in the United States following the 1930s, to discuss my research project with other peers and to gain a broader picture on the German-Jewish rabbinic diaspora by learning from other projects and colleagues.

I am interested to join the group with a caveat. 1. Unfortunately, I am not able to meet after 6pm. If this remains the time spot to meet, I would not be able to participate in all meetings. 2. Due to an uncertain job situation after 1 October 2024, I cannot fully commit to a 2-year cycle yet but will try to make it possible.

Project Outline

In the book project, I am analysing the life and times of Rabbi Joachim Prinz as a political biography. Prinz was one of the most prominent figures of German Jewry in the late 1920s and early 1930s and after his immigration to the United States in 1937 one of the most important and influential representatives of American Jewry from the 1940s to the 1970s. He was the rabbi of Congregation B'nai Abraham in Newark and Livingston from 1939 to 1977 and a leading figure of the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress in the 1950s through the 1970s. He became especially famous when he walked hand in hand with Martin Luther King, Jr. at the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" in August 1963 and delivered a speech immediately before MLK's "I have a dream" speech. His own experiences of Nazi oppression in the 1930s and the lessons of the Holocaust, he explicitly stated, were instrumental for his political activism in post-Holocaust America, particularly with regard to civil rights for the African-American community. Prinz' biography is above all an outstanding example for the transnational constellation of Jewish history in the twentieth century.

Presentation

Rabbi Joachim Prinz (1902–1988): Holocaust Memory, Jewish Survival and the Struggle for Civil Rights in postwar America

Short Bio

Dr David Jünger is a Lecturer for Contemporary History at the University of Rostock. He received his PhD from the University of Leipzig. His research focuses on Modern German and American Jewish History, Modern European History and the History of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. From 2012 to 2017 he worked at the Free University Berlin and from 2017 to 2021 at the University of Sussex, where he was also the Deputy Director of the Centre for

German-Jewish Studies. He is currently working on his second book about the life and times of the German-American rabbi Joachim Prinz (1902–1988). His most recent publications include:

- “Jahre der Ungewissheit. Emigrationspläne deutscher Juden 1933–1938 [Uncertain Years. Emigration planning of German Jews, 1933–1938], published with Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in 2016
- Historische Erfahrung und politisches Handeln. Rabbiner Joachim Prinz, der Nationalsozialismus und die afroamerikanische Bürgerrechtsbewegung [Historical Experience and Political Activism. Rabbi Joachim Prinz, Nazism, and the African American Civil Rights Movement], in: Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, vol. 70, no. 1 (2022), 1–30.