



## “VWI invites the Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Graz”

**Thursday, 12 March 2020, 3.00 pm**  
**1010 Vienna**  
**Rabensteig 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor , Research Lounge**

**Lisa SILVERMAN**

### **THE POSTWAR ANTISEMITE** **Culture and Complicity after the Holocaust**

In his influential *Réflexions sur la question juive* (1946), Jean-Paul Sartre observed: “If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him.” He thereby articulated the figural Jew as the product of the antisemitic imagination in a formulation that actually ascribes a great deal of power to a figural Antisemite – an ‘outsider’ presumably separate from Sartre and his readers – who bears full responsibility for demonising Jews. This figure became an indispensable trope that formed the basis for the persistence of age-old prejudices against Jews after the Holocaust via coded and less explicit references.



Photo: Veit Harlan after his acquittal, 23 April 1949,

Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-R76220 / CC-BY-SA

This presentation examines the development and implications of the figural Antisemite using the example of film director Veit Harlan, who in 1948 was accused of helping the Nazis commit crimes against humanity by directing the successful Nazi propaganda film *Jud Süß* (1940). Although Harlan was acquitted in 1950, examination of witness testimony at the trials as well as events that occurred outside the courtroom in Hamburg reveal how efforts to distance Harlan from the label ‘Antisemite’ and the crimes of the Nazis actually contributed to the perpetuation of antisemitism in a new, postwar form.

### **Commented by Olaf TERPITZ**

*Lisa Silverman* is Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and contributing editor of the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book for German-Jewish history. She is the author of *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars* (Oxford 2012) and co-author with Daniel H. Magilow of *Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction* (Bloomsbury 2019). She is currently a Senior Fellow at the VWI.

*Olaf Terpitz* received his PhD in Literature and Cultural Studies from the University of Leipzig and his habilitation in Slavonic Studies from the University of Vienna. He serves as deputy director of the Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Graz. Most recently he edited Shimon An-Ski’s *Der Khurbn in Polen, Galizien und der Bukowina. Tagebuchaufzeichnungen aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna 2019) and together with Marianne Windesperger a special issue of *In geveb. A Journal of Yiddish Studies on Translation: Poetics, Negotiation, Tradaptation* (New York 2019).

Please register at [anmeldung@vwi.ac.at](mailto:anmeldung@vwi.ac.at) by latest 11 March, 12.00 am and bring your ID.

The Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) is funded by: