Dreams, Terror, and Complicity: Reinhart Koselleck Meets Charlotte Beradt

Recently, there has been an uptick of interest across disciplines in the theoretical writings of the late Reinhart Koselleck. Whenever scholars deal with issues of temporality, with present pasts or past futures, the German conceptual historian’s work is invoked. Yet, in new histories of Fascist and Nazi times one of his most incisive essays, “Terror and Dream,” is oddly omitted. In his talk, he will explore Koselleck’s encounter with *Third Reich of Dreams* by Charlotte Beradt, a book that the German-Jewish émigré journalist wrote in the early 1960s. Especially Beradt’s suggestion that dreams are one of the most telling historical sources for understanding individual experiences of time in the 1930s fascinated Koselleck. In light of the resurgence of authoritarianism in our own time, the talk will ask whether Beradt’s and Koselleck’s analytical concern with the workings of dreams, terror, and complicity in everyday life gains new significance and urgency.

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