



German
Historical
Institute
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in cooperation with the

FACULTY OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

BIRTHE KUNDRUS (Hamburg)

will speak on

Ignorance, Indifference, Inaction? The *Volksgemeinschaft* and the
Holocaust

at the German Historical Institute, Seminar Room
on Tuesday, 4 November 2014, at 5.30 p.m.

Germans could learn about the Holocaust, if they only wanted to. Some of them did. But what exactly did they know and what did they do with their knowledge? Obviously attitudes towards the 'final solution' varied hugely. And concrete action included participation in plundering and killing on the one hand, and resistance and rescuing Jews on the other. In some cases, murderers rescued and resisters murdered. Nevertheless, the majority of the *Volksgenossen* remained passive. The Holocaust neither became a crucial test for the Nazi regime nor did it mobilize the approval of the masses. Based on ego-documents such as diaries and letters, the lecture discusses the still challenging question of how ordinary Germans responded to the genocide of the Jews.

Birthe Kundrus is Professor of Social and Economic History at the University of Hamburg. Her research specializes on German history, especially National Socialism and the German Empire, and on the history of violence and genocide. She is the author of *Kriegerfrauen: Familienpolitik und Geschlechterverhältnisse im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg* (1995) and *Moderne Imperialisten: Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien* (2003), and the editor of *Phantasiereiche: Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus* (2003). A volume edited jointly with Sybille Steinbacher, *Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten: Der Nationalsozialismus in der Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, was published in 2013.

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<http://www.ghil.ac.uk>**

This lecture will be held at 5.30 p.m. in the Seminar Room of the German Historical Institute, 17 Bloomsbury Square, LONDON WC1A 2NJ.

Tea is served from 5.00 p.m. in the Common Room, and wine is available afterwards.

Guided tours of the Library are available one hour before the lecture.