

## ISA ONLINE LECTURE

# SOUTH EAST ASIA AND ANTHROPOLOGISTS FROM VIENNA

## THE NAZI YEARS

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During the Nazi period, South East Asian research among socio-cultural anthropologists in Vienna and in exile played a fairly significant role.

The Nazi Party protégé Ria Horský wrote her thesis on religious wood sculptures in Nias and became an academic staff member at Vienna's Völkerkunde museum. There she engaged in a rivalry with the museum's curator Frederic M. Schnitger, a Dutch-Javanese expert in archaeology and regional historical studies. As a result of their conflict and of Schnitger's claims about political conspiracies, he faced trial and perished in a concentration camp just a few weeks before the war ended. Horský lost her job after Austria's liberation in 1945 and committed suicide in 1948.

Already a few weeks before the "Anschluss", Robert Heine-Geldern had managed to emigrate to the United States where he spent the decade until his return to Vienna in 1949. In the USA, Heine-Geldern took part in the Austrian monarchist resistance circles and after Pearl Harbour, in the US anti-Japanese war efforts' cultural dimensions. Already before the war, Heine-Geldern had elaborated the concept of "South East Asia". He then decisively contributed to the introduction of this non-colonial term as academic and media standard during his US service time.



**Andre Gingrich** is a Full Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and a Foreign Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. His current research projects include the analyses of selected aspects in the historical anthropology of South West Arabia, and in the history of anthropology.



**Peter Rohrbacher** is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Institute of Social Anthropology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. His current research project examines the ecclesiastical and political networks of "Völkerkunde" (Ethnology) from Austria during the interwar period (FWF P33427).

For further information about the book project „Ethnology in the Nazi period from Vienna“ please see the link:

[https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/Institute/ISA/news\\_und\\_neuerscheinungen/2021/Projekt\\_NS\\_Voelkerkunde\\_website\\_ISA\\_v6.pdf](https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/Institute/ISA/news_und_neuerscheinungen/2021/Projekt_NS_Voelkerkunde_website_ISA_v6.pdf)

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