  

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

II. International Conference

ERC Project “JudgingHistories”

Professor Dan Diner, Principal Investigator

**A War of Wars**

**The Year 1942 and the Semantics of Distinction**

### June 13-15, 2017 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mt. Scopus

WWII is a historical event involving armed conflicts of diverse intensity and significance in different theaters of war. The war in Europe erupted in September 1, 1939 with the German invasion of Poland. In East Asia another date might be chosen as the starting point of the event: The so-called Mukden Incident provoked by the Japanese Army on September 18, 1931, followed some years later by the outbreak of the “Second Sino-Japanese War”. The German onslaught on Western Europe, culminating in the fall of France in May-June 1940, indicates by its conduct, as well as by the ritual symbols of defeat, a war of continuity and of revenge according to the chain of Franco-German wars, and especially of WWI. With the assault of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union in June 1941, the war took a distinctive turn into the direction of a war based on ideological convictions (*Weltanschauungskrieg*) – a war of annihilation. And with the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, and the outset of the Pacific War, the different theaters, or more accurate: the different wars merged into an all-encompassing world war.

Against this historical background we intend to explore the fateful year of 1942, the year of the fatal divide between the lightening advances of the Axis powers and the turning point of Allied success, bringing that advance to a halt. The central theme to be addressed by the conference combines history of events with the history of historical semantics. The history of events will focus on the year 1942 while scrutinizing into history proper. The history of historical semantics seeks to shed light on the consciousness and perception of different peoples and factions among them – most particularly of those collectives who were at best ambivalent or still undecided to take sides in the struggle between Axis and Allies. On the continent those countries are of interest, which were leaning to the Axis, however fought their own war – Finland for example. In the colonies public opinion might have been torn between those who, fought their imperial masters, however represented fascist and dictatorial prospects. That might have been the case in South-Asia, as well as in the Near- and Middle East.

With the year 1942 in focus we invite scholars to present papers addressing the following questions: The year 1942 and the changing perception of the war

* in Asia, after the Battle of Singapore and before the Battle of Midway
* in the Near and Middle East before the Battle of El Alamein up to the landing of the Allies in North Africa,
* the ambivalence towards democratic, yet simultaneously colonial powers
* the changing perception of the war in Europe before and after the pivotal event of the Battle of Stalingrad.

Conjoined with the history of the pivotal year 1942 are the semantics and nomenclatures of the war, highlighting its meaning at the backdrop of different historical perceptions and memories

* the entanglement of the “Second Sino-Japanese War,” with the “Pacific War” and the history of their denominations
* the meaning and historical sounding board of naming – “Barbarossa,” “Great Patriotic War,” “Unconditional Surrender”, “Crusade for Freedom”, to name just a few
* the Finnish-Soviet “Winter War of 1939/40,” and the so-called “Continuation War” (‘*jatkosota*,’ of 25 June 1941 – 19 September 1944)
* the emergence and the dissemination of the designation “WWII” (Second World War) in the different political cultures of the participants and, particularly, the implied endurance of two wars, alluded to as the First and the Second World War’, apparently creating causal nexus.

Please send paper proposals and a short CV to lutz.fiedler@mail.huji.ac.il. Deadline for proposal submission is November 30, 2016. The proposal should state your main argument, not exceeding one page.

Suitable participants will be contacted and will be kindly asked to provide a version of their paper (not exceeding 8 pages) by May 25,2017. The papers will be circulated among all participants two weeks before the beginning of the conference. In order to enable a fruitful discussion, the presentations should not exceed 20 minutes.

Travel costs (economy) and the costs of accommodation in Jerusalem (3 nights) will be covered for all conference participants from abroad.

With best wishes,

Lutz Fiedler and Jonathan Matthews

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