Martina Kessel looks at the meaning and role of humor as an identity practice in Germany during the time of National Socialism in Germany. One theory that she will explore in her lecture is that non-Jewish Germans disguised violence as ‘art’ to justify their failure to comply with international or humanitarian beliefs.

Martina Kessel is a Historian of Modern Germany at Bielefeld University, Germany, with particular interest in inclusion and exclusion, the history of violence, international relations, gender and cultural history. She has written on British and French policy towards Germany after 1945; a History of Boredom in the 19th century, and on questions of theory and historiography. Her forthcoming book is titled Gewalt und Gelächter, 'Deutschsein' 1914-1945 (Laughter and Violence. ‘Being German’ 1914 – 1945).

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