

Aaron Gell and Dr. Geoffrey Levin - [A Conversation about the Past and Present of Zionism and Anti-Zionism](#)

Geoffrey Levin is an assistant professor of Middle Eastern and Jewish Studies at Emory University in Atlanta. Prior to joining Emory's faculty, Levin was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University's Center for Jewish Studies after earning a PhD in Hebrew & Judaic Studies/History from New York University in 2019. His first book, *Our Palestine Question: Israel and American Jewish Dissent, 1948-1978*, published by Yale University Press, has been discussed widely, including in *The Washington Post*, *Haaretz*, *The London Review of Books*, and *The Guardian*.

Aaron Gell is a freelance writer living in upstate New York. He has served as an adjunct instructor of journalism in NYU's [Prison Education Program](#), editor-in-chief of *The New York Observer* and of *Hemispheres* magazine, features editor of *Task & Purpose*, deputy editor of *Business Insider*, executive editor of *Radar*, and senior features editor of *W*. He has been a contributor to numerous publications, including *The Economist*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *The New Republic*, *The Baffler*, *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *New York*, *GQ*, *Elle*, *Dirt: A Supplement to Sassy*, and *The New York Times*. Gell is the author of "[Friend of the Devil](#)," Longform.org's "most clicked" story of 2015, and "[Unlucky Charms: The Rise and Fall of Billion-Dollar Jewelry Empire Alex + Ani](#)," SABEW's best business feature of 2020 and a Loeb Award finalist. His 2018 story "[Did Brian Easley Have to Die?](#)" served as the basis for the feature film *Breaking*, starring John Boyega and Michael K. Williams.

Dr. Mateo Jarquín - [The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaraguan and Global Perspective](#)

The Sandinista Revolution and its victory against the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua gripped the United States in the 1980s. But as soon as the Sandinistas were voted out of power in 1990 and the Iran Contra affair ceased to make headlines, it became, in Washington at least, a thing of the past. In his new book, Mateo Jarquín recenters the revolution as a major episode in the history of Latin America, the international left, and the Cold War. His talk will narrate the dramatic rise and fall of the revolution through the eyes of Sandinista leaders, connecting their dilemmas to events in Latin America, Western Europe, the socialist bloc and beyond. The last left-wing revolution of the twentieth century, he argues, is an important link between the Cold War and post-Cold War eras.

Mateo Jarquín is Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Program in War, Diplomacy, and Society at Chapman University. His scholarship explores the connections between revolutions, democracy, and international relations in the Global South. He is the author of *The Sandinista Revolution: A Global Latin American History* (University of North Carolina Press, 2024). Additionally, he writes regularly about contemporary Central American politics, including articles earlier this year for *The Journal of Democracy* and the *TIME* Made by History blog. Originally from Nicaragua, he holds a PhD from Harvard University and a BA from Grinnell College.

Dr. Florian Wagner - [The International Colonial Institute \(1893-1983\) and the Rise and Fall of Colonial Epistemologies](#)

This lecture traces the history of the International Colonial Institute (ICI), once the foremost think tank for colonial policy in the 20th century. Established in 1893, the ICI convened hundreds of colonial experts from thirteen countries at biennial international conferences, aimed at developing supposedly more efficient techniques of colonization through the exchange of shared experiences. This collaboration produced hundreds of comparative studies on various aspects of colonial governance and played a key role in institutionalizing colonial studies at European universities, transforming colonialism into an applied science embedded within European academic knowledge production. After 1945, the institute nominally decolonized, rebranding itself as the "International Institute of Differing Civilizations" and inviting delegates from the Global South to participate. This shift, initially rhetorical, soon took on a life of its own, particularly through the institute's journal *Civilizations*, which continues to exist today. He

argues that both internal and external critiques of the ICI ultimately fostered a distinctive notion of decoloniality, one that inverted the very colonial narratives the institute had once advanced.

Florian Wagner holds a PhD from the European University Institute in Florence and is an Assistant Professor at the University of Erfurt, Germany. He is the principal investigator of the research project Voluntariness and (Re-)Migration and has been awarded fellowships at UC Berkeley and the German Historical Institute. His research spans colonial history, African history, and the history of forced and voluntary (re-)migration. He is the author of *Colonial Internationalism and the Governmentality of Empire, 1893–1982* (CUP, 2022) and co-editor of the blog transimperialhistory.com.

Dr. Drew McKevitt - [Foreign Trash: How the Cold War Armed Americans with Cheap Guns](#)

How did the United States become *the* gun country? The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries offer answers, but they're of limited use for explaining the extraordinary and unprecedented growth of civilian firearms ownership after 1945. In this lecture, we'll look not at domestic gun tradition and culture but overseas, to the bounty of firearms left over from the Second World War in Europe. Brash young gun capitalists took advantage of that extraordinary new supply, and in the context of the emerging Cold War, shaped the gun country Americans know today, for better or worse.

Andrew C. McKevitt is the John D. Winters Endowed Professor of History at Louisiana Tech University. He received a Ph.D. from the Department of History at Temple University in 2009. His publications include two books with the University of North Carolina Press—*Consuming Japan: Popular Culture and the Globalizing of America* (2017), and *Gun Country: Gun Capitalism, Culture, and Control in Cold War America* (2023), which was recently longlisted for the 2024 Cundill History Prize.