

History Department Seminar 21 March 2012

Ursula Rack

(Canterbury History/Gateway Antarctica)

Fritz Loewe – From Greenland to Melbourne

Fritz Loewe was one of the meteorologists on the Greenland Expeditions of 1929-30 and 1930-31, under the leadership of Alfred Wegener. Loewe was Jewish and had to flee Germany after 1933. He fled to Cambridge, England, where he worked at the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) for two years. He subsequently travelled to Melbourne, Australia, where he established the Meteorological Institute. He lived in Melbourne until his death in 1974. His achievements in Melbourne, in particular, meant that he was highly respected and well regarded.

Loewe's story begins as one of insecurity, with the loss of his homeland and unfavourable prospects. As a result, Loewe was a humbled man but retained his ambitions as a scientist. Even during and after World War II, he remained in contact with his colleagues in Germany. This correspondence is the basis of an investigation into Loewe's achievements. Even from these less than perfect beginnings, Loewe succeeded in his private life and scientific career. The presentation aims to demonstrate the difficulties of a scientist in the changed world that the Nazis created for people with the 'wrong identity'.

URSULA RACK moved to New Zealand in 2006. She is currently an Adjunct Fellow of Gateway Antarctica and a tutor in History at the University of Canterbury. She studied history and theology at the University of Vienna, Austria, and completed a Magistra of Theology at the same institution. She has taught history, religion and politics through the school system in Austria and Germany. Ursula completed her doctoral thesis through the Alfred-Wegener-Institute for Polar and Marine Research in Bremerhaven, Germany and the University of Vienna in 2009.

Wednesday 21 March 2012 at 1.00 p.m.

Room 311, History Building