

BERLIN-BRANDENBURGER COLLOQUIUM
FÜR UMWELTGESCHICHTE
SOMMERSEMESTER 2017



Berlin Brandenburg Colloquium's Five Year Anniversary
Jubilee Talk with Award Winning
Professor KATE BROWN (American Academy Berlin / Baltimore, USA).
Abweichender Ort: Friedrichstr. 191-193, R. 5061

- Mittwoch, 03.05.2017 Kate Brown (Baltimore, USA / American Academy Berlin): **The Great Chernobyl Mystery: How Ignorance became Policy and Politics**
- Donnerstag, 18.05.2017 Simone Müller (München): **Chemicals on Tour. Explorations into a Material History of the Global Waste Economy**
- Donnerstag, 15.06.2017 Martin Kalb (Bridgewater, USA): **Fighting Nature in Swakopmund, German Colonial Southwest Africa (1884-1915)**
- Donnerstag, 22.06.2017 Dolores Augustine (New York, USA): **Popularization of Science and the Anti-Nuclear Power Movement in West and East Germany**
- Donnerstag, 06.07.2017 Christian Möller (Düsseldorf): **Konsens – Dissens – Krise: Das Scheitern des ökologischen Verwertungsregimes und der partizipatorischen Diktatur in der DDR**
- Donnerstag, 13.07.2017 Roi Ball (Los Angeles, USA): **Colonisation in the German-Polish borderlands, 1880s-1920s: work-in-progress between environment, landscape, agrarian, and social history**
- Donnerstag, 20.07.2016 Ruth Morgan (Melbourne, Australien/München): **"The Engineer is a Ruler of Men": Masculinity and the exchange of engineering expertise between British India and the Australian colonies**

Ort: **Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Friedrichstraße 191-193, Eingang Friedrichstr., Lift in den 4. Stock, Raum 4026.**

Zeit: **18:00 (c.t.) – 20:00 Uhr**

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Abstracts

Mittwoch, 03.05.2017

Kate Brown (Baltimore, USA; American Academy Berlin):

The Great Chernobyl Mystery: How Ignorance became Policy and Politics

After the Chernobyl disaster, scientists around the world advocated a large-scale long term study on the health effects of Chernobyl exposures to the 4.5 million people most directly exposed. That study never occurred, nor do scientists today claim to know much about a range of health effects from long-term, low-dose exposures to ionizing radiation. Brown explores the archival history of early Soviet revelations of a public health disaster occurring in the contaminated lands and how that story disappeared from the scientific consensus. The case points to political and environmental predicaments today in the age of the Anthropocene.

Short Bio:

Kate Brown lives in Washington, DC and is Professor of History at the University of Maryland in Baltimore (UMBC). She is the author of *Plutopia: Nuclear Families in Atomic Cities and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford 2013), which won seven prizes, including the Dunning and Beveridge prizes from the American Historical Association. Brown's *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Harvard 2004) was awarded the American Historical Association's George Louis Beer Prize for the Best Book in International European History. Brown's most recent book *Dispatches from Dystopia: History of Places Not Yet Forgotten* was published in 2015. Brown is the recipient of many fellowships, including from the John D. Guggenheim Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for Humanities. She is presently a fellow at the American Academy in Berlin and a Carnegie Fellow. She is currently writing a history of human survival and endurance in communities circling the Chernobyl Zone.

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Donnerstag, 18.05.2017

Simone Müller (München):

Chemicals on Tour. Explorations into a Material History of the Global Waste Economy

Chemicals, some of the smallest elements on our planet, are the key actors in the story of the global waste economy. They let themselves be molded and formed into myriad compounds making up industrial and commercial products ranging from plastics to pesticides and pharmaceuticals. Chemicals provide the basis of our comfortable modern way of life. At the same time, they also have the ability to permeate into our bodies and other biological organisms and do great harm to our health and environment. After the environmental turn in the 1970s, chemicals' effects turned out to be particularly gruesome when environmental and consumer laws deemed them unfit for consumption in one country while economic logic still allowed their commodification for other markets. Almost routinely, chemicals travelled with hazardous waste barges, as outlawed pharmaceutical and agricultural products or children's toys from industrial places in the global North to less-developed places in the global South. There, their effects on human health and environment manifested the inequality of a life's worth alongside the North's ecological debt towards the South.

This talk focuses on the international debates over chemicals as markers of environmental and social inequality on a global scale from the 1970s to the 1990s. It sets the chemicals in the focal point and so intends to not only shed new light on the political and economic processes so far exhibited in global waste studies, but also contribute to a material history of environmental history writing.

Short Bio:

Simone M. Müller is project director and principal investigator of the DFG-Emmy Noether Research Group "*Hazardous Travels. Ghost Acres and the Global Waste Economy*" located at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich. She is the editor of special issues with renowned journals on "Risks", "Green City" or "Communicating Capitalism" and has written extensively on the history of science and technology, media and globalization. Her book *Wiring the World. The Social and Cultural Creation of Global Telegraph Networks* was published by Columbia University Press in 2016. Dr. Müller is Young Fellow at the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Bielefeld and been nominated as outstanding young scholar for Academia.Net.

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Donnerstag, 15.06.2017

Martin Kalb (Bridgewater, USA):

Fighting Nature in Swakopmund, German Colonial Southwest Africa (1884-1915)

How did nature challenge German colonialism in Southwest Africa? What role did water, sand, and a small mollusk play as Germans tried to establish their first and, in many ways, only settler colony? These questions are at the center of a talk aiming to push environmental factors into the limelight of historical discussions. To do so, this paper explores the events surrounding the town of Swakopmund, a small coastal settlement defined as the main entry point (Eingangstür) into German Southwest Africa at the time. As a case study, or micro-history, Swakopmund arguably provides an excellent framework when showcasing the importance of widely underestimated environmental protagonists in the construction of the German empire; it also underlines the value of incorporating environmental history more broadly into discussions of German colonialism.

Short Bio:

Martin Kalb is Assistant Professor of History at Bridgewater College, a small liberal arts college in Virginia. He got his M.A. at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (2007) and his Ph.D. at Northern Arizona University (2011). His research focuses on Germany and its empires, with an emphasis on youth cultures and environmental history. He has published articles on these topics, and a monograph titled *Coming of Age: Constructing and Controlling Youth in Munich, 1942-1973* (Berghahn, 2016). He is currently completing research around environmental dynamics in German Southwest Africa.

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Donnerstag, 22.06.2017

Dolores Augustine (New York, USA):

Popularization of Science and the Anti-Nuclear Power Movement in West and East Germany

My talk draws on my book project, which attempts to understand the evolution of popular opinion regarding nuclear power in Germany. This is a difficult moment to talk about the popularization of science, given that popularization and science seem to be moving in different directions (climate change denial, vaccine skepticism). Science and democracy have, however, at times interacted constructively. In West Germany, the anti-nuclear power movement was advanced by two converging forces: the anti-nuclear power movement and the slow emergence of a pragmatic environmentalism. While highly critical of science in its institutional and professional manifestations, anti-nuclear power activists embraced science as a cognitive system. My talk traces the spread of key scientific arguments regarding low-dose radiation and nuclear reactor safety from the United States to counter-experts in West Germany and the popularizers who spread these views to a broader activist scene. Science popularization was also key to the emergence of a sustained critique of nuclear power in the GDR in the 1980s.

Short Bio:

Dolores Augustine is a professor of history at St. John's University, Jamaica, NY. She is a graduate of Georgetown and FU Berlin, where she obtained her PhD, supervised by Hartmut Kaelble. She is a member of the Advisory Board of the Center for Contemporary Historical Research (ZZF), Potsdam and has been on the organizing committee for of the German Studies Association's annual conference in 2012 and 2013. Her current research project, on which this talk is drawing, is on "*Atomic Power? Nein, Danke! Protest, Science, and Nuclear Energy in Germany, 1945 to the Present?*".

She has published widely on German social, economic and environmental history and the history of technology in the 19th and 20th centuries, including: *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990* (M.I.T. Press, 2007), *Patricians and Parvenus: Wealth and High Society in Wilhelmine Germany* (Berg Publishers, 1994); "Innovation and Ideology: Werner Hartmann and the Failure of the East German Electronics Industry," *The East German Economy, 1945-2010: Falling Behind or Catching Up?* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 95-110; "Chapter 4: Learning from War: Media Coverage of the Nuclear Age in the Two Germanies," in *The Nuclear Age in Popular Media: A Transnational History, 1945-1965*, ed. Dick van Lente (Palgrave, 2012), pp. 79-116.

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Donnerstag, 06.07.2017

Christian Möller (Düsseldorf):

Konsens – Dissens – Krise: Das Scheitern des ökologischen Verwertungsregimes und der partizipatorischen Diktatur in der DDR

Der Vortrag hinterfragt das bislang in Bezug auf die Umweltgeschichte der DDR vorherrschende Masternarrative des Niedergangs und beleuchtet die Hintergründe der Diskrepanz zwischen einem hoffnungsvollen umweltpolitischen Aufbruch um 1970 und der ökologischen Krise in den 80er Jahren. Im Fokus stehen folgende Fragen: Wie (und wem) gelang es, Umweltschutz auf die politische Agenda der DDR zu setzen? Was machte die ostdeutsche Umweltpolitik aus? Und schließlich, wo sind die Ursachen für ihr Scheitern jenseits teleologischer Deutungsmuster zu suchen? Dabei sollen neuere Ansätze aus der DDR-Forschung, wie etwa das Konzept der „partizipatorischen Diktatur“ (Fulbrook), im Hinblick auf ihren Aussagegehalt und ihre Anwendbarkeit diskutiert werden.

Kurzbiographie:

Christian Möller, M.A., Jg. 1984, Studium der Geschichtswissenschaft und Sozialwissenschaften an der Uni Bielefeld; 2011-2014 Promotionsstipendium der Johannes-Rau-Gesellschaft e.V.; seit 2014 Wiss. Mitarbeiter am Lehrstuhl für Wirtschaftsgeschichte, HHU Düsseldorf; derzeit Anfertigung der Dissertation bei Joachim Radkau; Publikationen (Auswahl): Zwischen Gestaltungseuphorie, Versagen und Ohnmacht: Umwelt, Staat und volkseigene Wirtschaft in der DDR (1967-1990), in: *ZUG* 60 (2015), 2, 141-167; Der Traum vom ewigen Kreislauf? Abprodukte, Sekundärrohstoffe und Stoffkreisläufe im „Abfall-Regime“ der DDR (1945-1990), in: *Technikgeschichte* 81 (2014), 1, 61-89.

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Donnerstag, 13.07.2017

Roi Ball (Los Angeles, USA): Colonisation in the German-Polish borderlands, 1880s-1920s: work-in-progress between environment, landscape, agrarian, and social history

In this talk I present the current state of my dissertation work-in-progress, and consider different ways in which environmental history inform and challenge my work.

My dissertation, tentatively titled "Constructing the Imperial Frontier: social history of the Prussian colonisation in the German-Polish borderlands, 1880s-1920s," deals with a settler-colonial project in the eastern provinces of Prussia that was officially about changing the demographic and socio-economic composition of a border area that had a significant Polish population. The main aspect of this project was agrarian settlement on previously bought estates that were divided into smaller settlement plots. My research deals with two such estates and their transformation into villages, tracing the changing social relationship and interactions between state, settlers, and local populations. I try to move back and forth between this micro-historical perspective and a broader consideration of the colonisation project, looking at landscape, knowledge, and the cultural and social 'production' of settlers.

Short Bio:

Roi Ball is a PhD Candidate at the department of history at the University of California, Los Angeles, working in the fields of German, settler-colonial and environmental histories. In summer semester 2017 he will be an ARTES International Research Fellow at the Historical Institute, University of Cologne. Roi completed his BA at Tel-Aviv University and is since 2013 at UCLA.

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Donnerstag, 20.07.2016

Ruth Morgan (Melbourne, Australien/München):

“The Engineer is a Ruler of Men”: Masculinity and the exchange of engineering expertise between British India and the Australian colonies

In his report on his 1890-91 tour of the sub-continent, Victorian parliamentarian Alfred Deakin (1856-1919) described the imperial role of the engineer as ‘a ruler of men’. Deakin’s observation underlines the political, social and cultural significance of the engineer and engineering works in colonial contexts, for he possessed the expertise to create order from disorder. As an instrument of imperial rule, therefore, the engineer both remade waterscapes and transformed social relations. How gender shaped and influenced these engineering exchanges has been little studied, and offers fresh perspectives into the ways in which the nexus of engineering, technology and masculinity was understood and articulated in colonial contexts. This paper will study contemporary accounts of these engineering encounters to explore the roles of masculinity and whiteness in these exchanges, and how these influenced the reception of engineers and the application of their schemes in British India and the Australian colonies.

Short Bio:

An environmental historian, Ruth Morgan’s research interests lie in the environmental exchanges that shaped colonial climate and hydrological knowledge in British India, the Australian colonies and the Cape Colony. Her award-winning first book, *Running Out? Water in Western Australia* (2015), explored the vulnerability of southwestern Australia to drought and anthropogenic climate change since the nineteenth century. She has published widely on the environmental history of water management in Australia, the British Empire and the American West, including the journals *Osiris*, the *Journal of Urban History*, *Radical History Review*, and *Australian Historical Studies*. She is a Carl Friedrich von Siemens Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellow 2017 of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, based at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich in 2017 as and will return to the National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, Australia in 2018 as a Senior Research Fellow.

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