

[Berlin Brandenburg Colloquium on Environmental History Summer 2022 \(online\)](#)

Announcement published by Jan-Henrik Meyer on Friday, April 15, 2022

Type:

Seminar

Date:

April 28, 2022 to June 23, 2022

Location:

Germany

Subject Fields:

Environmental History / Studies, German History / Studies, American History / Studies, History of Science, Medicine, and Technology, Economic History / Studies

ONLINE. Please write to us for the zoom login: meyer@zzf-potsdam.de.

Thursdays

19:00 - 21:00 hrs CET DST

Program

Thurs, 28.04.2022 Siegfried Evens (Stockholm):

Streams, Steams, and Steels: The Governance of Nuclear and Non-Nuclear Risks

Abstract:

As light water reactors are increasingly seen as a solution to achieving a sustainable energy transition and battling the climate crisis, it is more important than ever to study what the risks of using water for nuclear power production are. However, the technologies that manage all that water (and steam) have not enjoyed much attention from historians. Therefore, my PhD research project 'Streams, Steams, and Steels' aims to study the governance of risk of these crucial reactor components and materials by national and international actors from a historical perspective. Relying on archival sources from the U.S., Sweden, France, and multiple international organisations, as well as interviews, this dissertation attempts to write a new, *longue durée* history of nuclear safety, going back to the origins of water and steam risk management. In such a history, it becomes clear that a hybrid nuclear safety regime was shaped between the 1950s and 1980s - by a multitude of 'nuclear' and 'non-nuclear' actors - which was the result of a confrontation between older 'non-nuclear' steam safety regimes and newer 'nuclear' risk prevention measures.

Short Bio:

Siegfried Evens specialises in the history of risk and disaster. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm. In his PhD thesis entitled *Streams, Steams, and Steels: The Governance of 'Nuclear' and 'Non-Nuclear' Risks*, he researches the history of nuclear

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safety governance with a focus on water and cooling systems. His project is a part of the ERC-funded NUCLEARWATERS-project, under the supervision of Per Högselius, which attempts to rewrite the history of nuclear energy with a focus on water.

Recent publications: Evens, Siegfried. «Les risques de refroidissement : l'eau comme frontière spatiale et temporelle de l'énergie nucléaire ». In: *Enquêter dans le nucléaire*. Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes. 2022; (with Lindström, Kati et al.) "How Should History of Technology Be Written? Some Lessons from an Ongoing Research Project on the Global History of Nuclear Energy". *Technikgeschichte* 88 (2021); "The Seeds of a European Risk Society: Marcinelle and the European Coal and Steel Community". *European Review of History* 28, nr. 3 (2021); "A Complicated Way of Boiling Water: Nuclear Safety in Water History". *Water History* 12 (2020).

Thursday, 05.05.2022 Nicole Rehnberg (Santa Barbara):

Racializing Redwoods: Staging "Big Trees" at the Second International Exhibition of Eugenics

Abstract

In this talk, I explore the exhibition that followed the Second International Congress of Eugenics held at the American Museum of Natural History in 1921 and how organizers used "Big Trees" (Coast Redwoods and Giant Sequoias) as a symbol, method, and data to showcase and promote eugenic agenda. Genealogists and life scientists have used trees as a symbol of life and connections changing over time, as well as a methodological tool to make sense and order of life. Eugenicists were no exception. Harry H. Laughlin and his assistant Alice M. Hellmer continued this practice and created the "Eugenics Tree" image in 1919, to assist in writing an article. The image featured "allied sciences" at the root of the tree, which showed how different disciplines naturally come together to create eugenics. Laughlin, head of the exhibition's committee, used the image and its organizing logic to create the exhibition's theme, "Eugenics and Allied Sciences," and the organization of its 131 displays. One of the displays materialized the symbol and the method of trees by presenting research using Big Tree rings as data that proved climatic changes due to immigration created civilization decline. I argue that the use of Big Trees as symbol, method, and data at the Second International Exhibition of Eugenics illustrates how eugenics and conservation worked in tandem, not just contemporaneously, controlling landscapes and human bodies and, at times, used the same methods to do so.

Short Bio:

Nicky Rehnberg is an environmental public historian and doctoral candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her dissertation, "White Roots, Redwoods: Racializing German and US Conservation, 1920-1945" examines how Coast Redwoods and Giant Sequoias were used transnationally as an object of racial science and a tool of white nationalism and white supremacy in the early twentieth century. It investigates how conservationists conflated forest and racial management in Germany and the US and shows the connections between conservation and eugenics, as it was literally displayed in natural history museums and public parks in Germany and the US. She is also a part of UCSB's and California State Parks' program History and Relevancy, in which she researches, writes, and creates programming on California history for the public.

Monday (!), 13.06.2022 Gisela Hürlimann (Dresden):

Das raffinierte Tier. Zur Wirtschafts- und Technikgeschichte sogenannter Schlachtnebenprodukte /

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Refined Animality. Processing Slaughter By-Products in the Industrial Age

In Kooperation mit dem Kolloquium des Fachgebiets Technikgeschichte der TU Berlin (Heike Weber)
Different time: 16-18 hrs, Room H 2038, Main building TU Berlin (Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623 Berlin) and Online

Online-Login: <https://tu-berlin.zoom.us/j/97539585492?pwd=UjRRMllYUnNoRTgyS05nSWRobXY3dz09>; Meeting-ID: 975 3958 5492, Passwort: 99428074

Abstract:

In the fast growing cities of the late 19th century, the handling of slaughter waste became both an environmental challenge and a commercial chance. The newly constructed or reformed slaughterhouses were not only a site for the publicly regulated meat supply, but also part of the medical-hygienic and industrial complex. As such, they can be conceived as a trading zone for the afterlife of farm animals: for rendering their „biotrash“ (Naomi Pfeiffer 2010) into a polyvalent resource for industrial, scientific and pharmaceutical uses. Quentin Deluermoz and François Jarrige (2017) ascribed farm animals the capacity to offer a subtle technology for human-animal interaction, and a constant potential for perfection. This is, though, not only true for animal labor or animal products such as milk, eggs, manure - and meat. Rather, it also applies to the refinement and usage of slaughter by-products in the industrial age - an underexplored dimension in animal or commodity history as well as in the history of technology.

Short Bio:

Gisela Hürlimann is Professor for the History of Technology and for Economic History at the Technical University (TU) Dresden. Her current publications include *Not Paying Taxes. Histories of Tax Avoidance, Evasion and Resistance*, Routledge forthcoming 2022 (with K. Schönhärl and D. Rohde), *Staging History: Anniversaries in European Institutions of Higher Learning from 1850 to the Present*, De Gruyter 2022 (with A.F. Guhl) and *Auf den Spuren des Nutztiers* (traverse 2-2021, with A. Elsig et al.)

Thursday, 23.06.2022 Janis Maximilian Meder (Berlin)

„Business changes the world“. Ecologically responsible business in the 1970s and 1980s

Das ökologisch verantwortungsbewusste Unternehmen der 1970er und 1980er Jahre

Abstract:

In dem Vortrag wird Janis M. Meders Dissertationsprojekt vorgestellt, das eine historische Perspektive die gesellschaftliche Verantwortung privatwirtschaftlicher Unternehmen einnimmt. Der Aktivismus und die Protestkultur der Umweltbewegung werden demnach als richtungsweisend für das Konstrukt des sogenannten ökologisch und sozial „verantwortungsbewussten“ Unternehmens der 1970er und 1980er Jahre angesehen. Es soll hierbei deutlich werden, inwieweit Unternehmen ökologische Ziele aufgriffen und in privatwirtschaftliche Strukturen integrierten. Im Zentrum steht die Frage, wie Entwürfe des vermeintlich alternativen, ökologisch motivierten Wirtschaftens durch kapitalistische, marktwirtschaftliche Logiken transformiert wurden. Die vergleichende Fallstudie untersucht folglich die Unternehmen The Body Shop (GB) und dm (BRD) als historische Akteur*innen, die bis heute zwischen Profitmaximierung und Umweltschutz agieren. Die Praxis der Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) und das privatwirtschaftliche Postulat der Nachhaltigkeit im 21. Jahrhundert werden als Folgen der untersuchten Prozesse interpretiert.

Kurzbiographie:

Janis Maximilian Meder ist Promotionsstudent an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (HU). 2021 hat

er an der Freien Universität Berlin (FU) seinen Masterabschluss in Geschichte und Germanistik erhalten und schloss umgehend das Promotionsstudium der Geschichtswissenschaften an. Die Schwerpunkte seiner Arbeit bilden die transatlantische Geschichte Westeuropas, die Unternehmensgeschichte und die Umweltgeschichte.

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