

# BERLIN-BRANDENBURGER COLLOQUIUM

## FÜR UMWELTGESCHICHTE

WINTERSEMESTER 2021/22



- Mittwoch, 08.12.2021 Elisa Tizzoni (Florence, Italy)  
**How Green is my Europe? The Environmental Commitment of the European Court of Auditors (1977-2020)**
- Mittwoch, 12.01.2022 Jacob Darwin Hamblin (Corvallis, OR, USA)  
**The Wretched Atom and its Cornucopian Promise**
- Mittwoch, 26.01.2022 Anna Katharina Wöbse (Gießen, Germany)  
Patrick Kupper (Innsbruck, Austria)  
**Greening Europe: Environmental Protection in the Long 20th Century**
- Mittwoch, 09.02.2022 Elizabeth Hameeteman (Boston, MA, USA)  
**Pipe Dreams: Desalination and the Promise of Unlimited Water and Power in the 1950s and 1960s**
- Ort: **ONLINE.** Bitte schreiben Sie uns an [meyer@zzf-potsdam.de](mailto:meyer@zzf-potsdam.de), dann senden wir Ihnen die Login Daten.
- Zeit: **19:00 – 21:00 Uhr**
- Kontakt: **Astrid M. Kirchhof** [astrid.m.kirchhof@hu-berlin.de](mailto:astrid.m.kirchhof@hu-berlin.de)  
**Jan-Henrik Meyer** [meyer@zzf-potsdam.de](mailto:meyer@zzf-potsdam.de)

Kooperationspartner:



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Mittwoch, 08.12.2021 Elisa Tizzoni (Pisa, Italy)

### **How Green is my Europe? The Environmental Commitment of the European Court of Auditors (1977-2020)**

#### **Abstract:**

The research aims to investigate the contribution of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) to the environmental awareness of the European bodies and the member states and its commitment to the cause of sustainable development. Even if the role of the Court in the “environmental turn” of the European Community is barely recognized, the contribution of the Court of Auditors went far beyond prompting accountability and transparency in the environment-related programmes and policies. Thus, the research sheds light on the contribution of the European Court of Auditors in the field of environmental protection, in order to assess how the Court supported the adoption of sustainable development patterns within the European Community and the European Union in the period 1977-today. The research merges methods and conceptual tools from environmental history and political sciences and relies on a vast array of sources, held at the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence.

#### **Short Bio:**

Elisa Tizzoni holds a PhD in Modern History (University of Pisa, 2011) and is currently Adjunct Professor in Modern European History at the University of Pisa. She has worked as an Adjunct Professor at the Universities of Pisa, Florence and Padua; she has obtained research grants from the University of Florence, the European University Institute in Fiesole, the University of Innsbruck and other cultural institutions. She has been Invited Lecturer at the University of Salzburg. She is the author of more than 50 publications; her latest book was released in 2021: *Il turismo e la costruzione dell'Europa. Le politiche turistiche dei Paesi europei tra sviluppo economico e soft power*, Milano, Franco Angeli. Her research places a specific emphasis on the tourism policies and the tourism diplomacy in Modern Europe, the environmental history of the European integration process, the social outcomes of the EEC policies.

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Mittwoch, 12.01.2022 Jacob Darwin Hamblin (Corvallis, OR, USA)

### **The Wretched Atom and its Cornucopian Promise**

#### **Abstract:**

After the Second World War, the United States offered a new kind of atom that differed from the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This atom would cure diseases, produce new foods, make deserts bloom, and provide abundant energy for all. It was an atom destined for the formerly colonized, recently occupied, and mostly non-white parts of the world that were dubbed the "wretched of the earth" by Frantz Fanon. The peaceful atom had so much propaganda potential that President Dwight Eisenhower used it to distract the world from his plan to test even bigger thermonuclear weapons. His scientists said the peaceful atom would quicken the pulse of nature, speeding nations along the path of economic development and helping them to escape the clutches of disease, famine, and energy shortfalls. That promise became one of the most misunderstood political weapons of the twentieth century. It was adopted by every subsequent US president to exert leverage over other nations' weapons programs, to corner world markets of uranium and thorium, and to secure petroleum supplies. Other countries embraced it, building reactors and training experts. Atomic promises were embedded in Japan's postwar recovery, Ghana's pan-Africanism, Israel's quest for survival, Pakistan's brinkmanship with India, and Iran's pursuit of nuclear independence. While the United States promised peace and plenty, it planted the seeds of dependency and set in motion the creation of today's expanded nuclear club.

#### **Short Bio:**

**Jacob Darwin Hamblin** is Professor of History at Oregon State University. His books include *Poison in the Well: Radioactive Waste in the Oceans at the Dawn of the Nuclear Age*, *Oceanographers and the Cold War*, and *Arming Mother Nature: The Birth of Catastrophic Environmentalism*, which won the Paul Birdsall Prize of the American Historical Association and the Watson Davis and Helen Miles Davis Prize of the History of Science Society. His latest book is *The Wretched Atom: America's Global Gamble with Peaceful Nuclear Technology* (2021).

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Mittwoch, 26.01.2022 Anna Katharina Wöbse (Gießen, Germany)

Patrick Kupper (Innsbruck, Austria)

### **Greening Europe: Environmental Protection in the Long 20th Century**

#### **Abstract:**

Fresh from the printing presses: "*Greening Europe: Environmental Protection in the Long 20th Century*" is Volume 1 of the handbook series "*Contemporary European History*". In 15 chapters, 24 authors have dealt with the question of changing human-nature relations by looking at the many ways people have interacted with their environments and made them issues of European concern. How did notions of Europe matter in these activities? What kind of entanglements of activists across the subcontinent exist? How did they connect and network, exchange knowledge, worldviews, and strategies that exceeded their national horizons? Which role did flora and fauna, spaces, places and infrastructures play in both "greening" Europe and making Europe a shared environment? The editors will be joined by authors to discuss the main findings and challenges of this book project.

#### **Short Bios:**

**Patrick Kupper** is Full Professor of Economic and Social History at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. His expertise is in transnational economic, social and environmental history of modern Europe. He is the author of *Creating Wilderness: A Transnational History of the Swiss National Park* (New York: Berghahn, 2014) and of an introduction to environmental history of modern Europe, *Umweltgeschichte* (Göttingen: UTB, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021)

**Anna-Katharina Wöbse** is an environmental historian, curator, and researcher at the University of Gießen. She has extensively published on media and the environment, human-animal relations, and the history of transnational environmental movements and diplomacy (*Weltnaturschutz: Umweltdiplomatie in Vereinten Nationen und Völkerbund 1920-1950*, Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 2012). Her current research project focusses on the history of wetlands and amphibians.

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Mittwoch, 09.02.2022 Elizabeth Hameeteman (Boston, MA, USA)  
**Pipe Dreams: Desalination and the Promise of  
Unlimited Water and Power in the 1950s and 1960s**

### Abstract:

In 1967, at the International Conference on *Water for Peace*, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson warned of water scarcity: “How can we awaken the world’s people and the world’s leaders to this urgent task?” he asked. “If this is the problem now, what will the future bring?” More than fifty years later, we still need answers. But at that moment, a loosely allied group of international scientists, politicians, and officials firmly believed in the potential of desalination as a localized solution to a global problem, and constituted examples of the midcentury “hydronaut”: a person who considered existing water scarcity as one of the most important impediments to future economic growth and prosperity, and approached the quest for water with a sharp sense of mission. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, hydronauts in the United States, the Netherlands, Tunisia, Chile, the United Kingdom, and within the United Nations system considered desalination as a new and innovative strategy to achieve interrelated policy objectives, all with the ultimate goal of creating a new source of fresh water free of the constraints imposed by water variability and availability, and able to compete with more conventional sources of supply. By uncovering how such hydronauts imagined the potential of desalination, and tried to jumpstart its widespread adoption, this research complicates and adds additional layers to understandings of the development era.

### Short Bio:

Elizabeth Hameeteman is a doctoral candidate in History at Boston University and has recently submitted her thesis. Her research interests include sustainable development, environmental law and policy, and all things water. Originally from the Netherlands and now based in Berlin, she has a background in Law and American Studies. Elizabeth is also the Executive Editor and Founder of Environmental History Now, an online platform that showcases the environmental-related work and expertise of graduate students and early career scholars who identify as women, trans and non binary people.

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