

## **Körber History Forum** **Connecting Politics and History**

In an age of growing political, national and religious divisions, historical orientation and reckoning with our past are central to dealing with current conflicts. Therefore, the Körber History Forum focuses on the impact of the past on the politics of the present at a European and global level. For two days, it brings together approximately 300 eminent experts and international decision-makers from the realms of academia, politics and diplomacy, civil society and the media, connecting historical insight and political practice.

The **Körber History Forum 2021** will take place on **18 and 19 May** in Berlin and online, giving speakers and invited guests the opportunity to interact on its digital online platform.

### **Programme**

#### **Tuesday, 18 May**

06:00 – 07:30 p.m. (CET) Opening and Panel Discussion

**Thomas Paulsen**, Member of the Executive Board, Körber-Stiftung, Hamburg

#### **Putting the “New Normal“ in historical perspective** **Politics, power and the people in the digital post-Covid era**

The Corona pandemic has given the field of digital information technology and data-based analysis an unprecedented boost. At the same time, false and manipulated information in the virtual sphere has both undermined scientific and political discourse over the past years and weakened democratic institutions. Using data-based information to purposely steer opinion is not a new phenomenon but can be traced back to the era of the Cold War. How does the digital public of today differ from social networks of the past? What is the impact of “big data” on democratic processes and institutions, how does the if/then logic of algorithms impact our lives and fortunes as societies? And what does this mean for freedom of opinion and democratic debating culture?

**Niall Ferguson**, Stanford University

**Marietje Schaake**, Cyber Peace Institute, Geneva / Stanford University

**Jamie Susskind**, author and barrister, London

Moderator: **Cathryn Clüver Ashbrook**, Harvard University, Cambridge MA

Wednesday, 19 May

09:00 – 09:30 a.m. (CET) Spotlight

**Beyond great expectations?**

**Tracing the loss of European optimism and the dismantling of the postwar order**

**Geert Mak**, author and historian, Amsterdam

Moderator: **Ariane Reimers**, ARD/NDR, currently MERICS, Berlin

09:30 – 10:30 a.m. (CET) Panel Discussion

**No longer “best friends forever”?**

**Alliances and divisions in a changing Europe**

At the turn of the millennium, Europe seemed a continent of great prospects. No longer divided, the scheduled Eastern expansion of the EU raised hopes for a common future in which the Franco-German engine would be complemented by the Weimar Triangle.

However, the crises of 2008, 2015, and most recently 2020 broke up historic alliances and gave way to new, flexible coalitions. How can the current architecture of alliances within the EU be understood against the backdrop of 20th century history? How have the Coronavirus and “the year that never happened” impacted political, economic, and social solidarity within Europe? And what can be learned from the “historic” Corona crisis for the future?

**Nora Bossong**, author, Berlin

**Geert Mak**, author and historian, Amsterdam

**Alexander Stubb**, European University Institute, Florence

**Justin Vaïsse**, Paris Peace Forum, Paris

Moderator: **Ariane Reimers**, ARD/NDR, currently MERICS, Berlin

10:30 – 11:00 a.m. (CET) Spotlight

**What next for Europe and the EU?**

**Political lessons from the Corona crisis**

**Karoline Edtstadler**, Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution, Vienna

Moderator: **Andreas Rinke**, Chief Correspondent Thomson Reuters, Berlin

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (CET) Panel Discussion

### **Ill fares the world?**

#### **Global health equity between human rights, national interests and weakened multilateralism**

The Corona pandemic has not only brought historic challenges to health systems worldwide, but has also injected a new sense of urgency into the question of healthcare. As an integral part of the global order that was established after 1945, what basis does international humanitarian law provide to guarantee equal access to healthcare? How have internationally documented and agreed legal standards been tested and scrutinised in the past and present? And how can international cooperation in both preventive and reactive measures of healthcare be balanced against national interests?

**Agnes Binagwaho**, University of Global Health Equity, Kigali

**Mark Honigsbaum**, City University of London

**Armin von Bogdandy**, Max-Planck-Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg

Moderator: **Sven Stockrahm**, ZEIT Online

12:10 – 12:40 p.m. (CET) Deep Dive

### **Political complications? Understanding health as a human right**

**Agnes Binagwaho**, University of Global Health Equity, Kigali

Moderator: **Charlie Weller**, Wellcome Trust, London

01:30 – 02:30 p.m. (CET)

### **History & Politics Dialogues**

Exclusive and confidential talks with leading experts. Parallel sessions open to registered participants

02:45 – 03:45 p.m. (CET) Panel Discussion

### **Is it that simple? The allure of authoritarianism**

The Corona pandemic and the political measures taken to contain it have reignited a debate on the “allure of the authoritarian” and the “temptation of populism”. The storm on the US Capitol, brandishing the imperial Reich flag on the stairs of the German Bundestag and the *Gilets Jaunes* movement in France illustrate a rejectionist sentiment towards democratically legitimated institutions and processes in some parts of the population and a growing sympathy towards authoritarian structures and ideologies. What conditions have facilitated the rise of anti-democratic forces in the past? How do authoritarianism and populism currently influence politics? And how can we overcome the dangerous and socially numbing unease with institutional democratic politics and its actors?

**Ruth Ben-Ghiat**, New York University

**Jan-Werner Müller**, Princeton University, New Jersey / Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin

Moderator: **Constanze Stelzenmüller**, Brookings Institution, Washington D.C.

04:00 – 05:00 p.m. (CET) Panel Discussion

### **Taken or granted?**

#### **Future prospects and the debt dilemma**

The challenges faced by the global economy in the “historic crisis year” of 2020 have renewed the debate on state fiscal interventionism and its impact on economic and social security. While circumstances have changed, the phenomenon of rising national debt recurs throughout history, especially in times of crisis. How and to what end have states assumed debt in the past? Which requirements would apply for transnationally shared debt, for instance at European level, and what consequences must be considered? And who will foot the bill when public debt increases during times of crisis?

**Claudia Buch**, Deutsche Bundesbank, Frankfurt

**Silvia Merler**, Algebris Policy & Research Forum, Milan

**Quinn Slobodian**, Wellesley College, Wellesley

Moderator: **Marc Beise**, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

05:10 – 05:40 p.m. (CET) Spotlight

### **Of aliens and ancestors**

#### **The untold stories of Black Europeans**

**Olivette Otele**, University of Bristol

Moderator: **Christine Gerberding**, NDR Broadcasting

In cooperation with »Kulturjournal« of Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR)

05:40 – 06:45 p.m. (CET) Panel Discussion

### **How Black is Europe?**

#### **Historical roots and the societal impact of racism**

The #BlackLivesMatter movement has sparked a necessary and long-overdue debate about discrimination, marginalisation and racially-motivated violence faced by Black people, also in Europe. Which blind spots do we need to account for in the context of colonial expansion and the notion of white supremacy? Which political, legal, economic, and cultural practices form the basis for structural racism encountered by People of Colour? And what can policymakers do to enable equal representation in the political sphere and in society?

**Fatima El-Tayeb**, University of California, San Diego

**Momodou Malcolm Jallow**, Sveriges Riksdag, Stockholm, and Council of Europe, Strasbourg

**Olivette Otele**, University of Bristol

Moderator: **Christine Gerberding**, NDR Broadcasting

In cooperation with »Kulturjournal« of Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR)

06:45 – 07:15 p.m. (CET) Farewell

**Wednesday, 19 May**

13:30-14:30 (CET)

### **History & Politics Dialogues**

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#### **Unknown neighbours or partners? Europe and the Middle East**

The so-called Arab Spring stands for cultural and social change, but also for discord, struggles in economic distribution and conflicts between generations. In addition, it stands for Europe's lacking understanding of its southern neighbours. When contentious domestic developments and social changes in the region led to renewed protests in 2019, Europe once again was caught with blinders on, exposing an ongoing unawareness of a central geopolitical region at its doorstep. How much is Europe's image of North Africa and the Middle East shaped by European colonial history and external geopolitical interventions of the past? What stance could Europe adopt in future? What does this mean for possible orientations of European foreign policy in the region?

**Lina Khatib**, Chatham House, London

Chair: **Robert Chatterjee**, zenith magazine, Berlin

#### **The Bundeswehr at war - the Afghanistan Mission as part of the American "War on Terror"**

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 also marked the beginning of the "war on terror" declared by the USA. Germany sided with its most important ally and assumed responsibility in Afghanistan as a sign of unrestricted solidarity – until today. In retrospect, how should the intervention be assessed in terms of its success? How did the moral framework of international politics shift with 9/11? And what influence did the fight against Islamist terrorism have on the domestic political climate and on the image of Islam in Germany and the USA?

**Sönke Neitzel**, University of Potsdam

Chair: **Almut Wieland-Karimi**, Center of International Peace Operations, Berlin

### **Out of the shadows! Nation and nation-state in Belarus**

The outcome of the Belarusian presidential elections in August 2020 sparked a broad social protest movement, which the state responded to with an unprecedented wave of repression and violence. What national identities are (re)emerging in Belarus in the struggle for civil rights and liberties, 30 years after the end of the Soviet Union? How is the tension between territorial integrity, sovereignty of the nation state and economic dependency on neighbouring Russia developing? And what role can and should external parties, such as Germany and the EU, play in supporting democratic actors in Belarus in overcoming the crisis?

**Olga Shparaga**, philosopher, Vilnius

Chair: **Gabriele Freitag**, German Association for East European Studies, Berlin

### **Behemoth of modernisation? China and the "Great Leap" to world power status**

At the beginning of the 20th century, the former "Middle Kingdom" was little more than a pawn of foreign interests, torn between external exploitation, internal revolution and civil war. What role did the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and the major milestones in China's 20th century history play in the country's modernisation and its rise to become a world power? How do authoritarianism, oppression and progress relate to each other? How has the Western view of China changed in recent decades? And in which way did China's actions during the Corona pandemic influence this perception?

**Klaus Mühlhahn**, Zeppelin University, Friedrichshafen

Chair: **Nora Müller**, Körber-Stiftung, Berlin

### **Children of the Anthropocene. Economic growth, consumerism and global environmental justice in the light of historical responsibility**

Climate change and environmental degradation are at the heart of global problems in the 21st century. Since the industrialisation of the 19th century and with the consumer orientation of the 20th century, questions have arisen about the limits to growth. The answers to these questions are different in the leading industrial nations than in the countries of the formerly colonised South, which suffer particularly from the consequences of climate change. What does historical responsibility imply in the context of climate justice? How can historical differences and conflicts over land and resources, which shape inter-state relations in many parts of the world and are exacerbated by climate change, be overcome and transformed into a common climate policy? What does it take for the climate issue to be recognised as a challenge for all humankind?

**Dipesh Chakrabarty**, University of Chicago

Chair: **Andrew Gilmour**, Berghof Foundation, Berlin

### **The engine of our advancement? A global perspective on capitalism in past and present**

For centuries, Europe has prided itself on its contribution to progress, enlightenment, prosperity and the development of global trade flows in the modern era. The further development of capitalism as the dominant economic and social model is equally considered a European achievement. The history of capitalism as a global history of interdependence is less frequently discussed. How does taking a global perspective change the view of the past and present of capitalism and progress? What impulses can such an approach provide for a deeper understanding of the contributions made to the development of capitalist economic and social orders, by diverse actors from both the global South and North? What implications does this have for the interaction of North and South in today's age of globalisation?

**Sven Beckert**, Harvard University, Cambridge

Chair: **Shalini Randeria**, Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna

### **Caught up in the past? The weaponisation of history in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan**

In autumn 2020, the protracted conflict over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh led to renewed war between Armenia and Azerbaijan - with the participation of other regional actors. Since the end of the Soviet Union, the two Caucasus republics have been caught in a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence that has hindered democratisation and economic cooperation in the region and entrenched militaristic and patriarchal structures. Which historical narratives and which instruments of memory culture do both sides employ to underpin their respective interpretations of the past? And which initiatives from civil society and alternative political and cultural actors can break the downward spiral of war and violence?

**David Leupold**, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin

Chair: **Katja Fausser**, Körber-Stiftung, Hamburg

### **Deceptive Memory? What Germans really remember about National Socialism - a representative interim assessment**

How Germany remembers, visualises and wrestles with its National Socialist past today is multifaceted – and the consensus on remembrance is challenged: Distorted narratives prevail in families, and films and other sources often shape ideas of history more than historical research. Changes in collective memory are noticeable, in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, but their extent and their dynamics remain uncertain. How people in Germany remember the National Socialist era is the subject of the representative MEMO study published by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) in Bielefeld in May 2021, which has been conducted annually since 2018 and is funded by the German Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ). How can the central results of the previous MEMO studies be summarised? What interim conclusion would be appropriate? And what do the findings mean for remembrance in Germany, but also in other European countries?

**Andreas Zick**, University of Bielefeld  
Chair: **Andrea Despot**, EVZ Foundation, Berlin

### **Virtual Auschwitz? On future reckoning with the Holocaust**

Technological advances and the digital ubiquity of the past are swiftly changing the landscapes of memory in which our societies explore, enact and deliberate the legacies of our past. The opportunities presented by digitalisation stand against questions of historical authenticity and the uniqueness of historical experience, especially when these touch on venues central to understanding Europe's violent 20<sup>th</sup> century. Can an immersive experience of a "Virtual Auschwitz" replace a visit to the memorial of the concentration camp? What impact will digital depictions of a seemingly authentic past have on our collective understanding of history? From the possibilities of augmented reality to the perils of deep-fake – where will digital remembrance lead us?

**Tomasz Michaldo**, Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim  
**Christian Kuchler**, RWTH Aachen University  
Chair: **Fiona Fritz**, Körber-Stiftung, Hamburg



### **Which GDR? Perspectives on a state and its dissolution**

Thirty years after its end, a definitive history of the German Democratic Republic remains to be written. Its historicisation and political appropriation between dictatorship and quotidian history continues. At the same time, new perspectives on the state and its society, its dissolution and the subsequent period of transformation are being developed and publicly discussed. Who is trying to appropriate the history of the GDR and how? What new perspectives are there in scholarly and societal debate? What images do documentaries and feature films convey? What continues to be neglected in narratives about the GDR? How could an inclusive German discourse take on its historical legacy?

**Saskia Handro**, University of Münster - Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

**Sabine Michel**, author and director, Berlin

Chair: **Christine Strotmann**, Körper-Stiftung, Hamburg

### **Contact**

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