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Historical Institute
Washington

GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG



Berkeley History



Photo by Roman Harak: Chernobyl and Pripyat: Once upon a time... maybe a good place for children or lovers. This is part of a small building where the tickets were sold to the side-shows.

Gerda Henkel Lecture Tour

When the Disaster Comes to Visit

The Chernobyl Children and the Transnational History of a Nuclear Disaster

Melanie Arndt

Chair, Economic, Social and Environmental History, University Freiburg

After the Chernobyl disaster, over a million children from Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia were sent abroad to recover from radiation and post-Soviet hardships. A transnational network of NGOs and private individuals emerged to aid them, raising global awareness about the disaster's ecological, medical, social, and political impacts. In this talk, Melanie Arndt discusses how the Chernobyl children symbolize the end of a political era and life in the Anthropocene, where human impact on the planet knows no borders.

Sept. 24, 2024 | 5 p.m. | 223 Philosophy Hall

GERDA HENKEL LECTURE TOURS CONTINUE THIS FALL WITH MELANIE ARNDT

This fall, we are excited to welcome Melanie Arndt as our eighth Gerda Henkel Lecturer. Professor Arndt will give talks and teach a masterclass at four universities in California and Arizona: UC Berkeley (September 24), Stanford University (September 26), Cal State Long Beach (October 1), and Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff (October 7). The Pacific Office of the GHI Washington organizes the lecture tours twice a year in cooperation with the Gerda Henkel Foundation. The program brings German historians to the West Coast to present their research and engage in dialogue with their colleagues in the US and Canada. Melanie Arndt joined Albert Ludwig University Freiburg as chair for economic, social and environmental history in April 2020. In her latest book, she analyzes the transnational networks that were created around the so-called Chernobyl children, who became both witnesses and representatives of a vanishing political system, the dissolution of the bipolar world order, and life in the Anthropocene.