



Introduction

Greetings and welcome to the third quarterly newsletter of the Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences / Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe (KFG) "Universalism and Particularism in European Contemporary History" at the School of History at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. As we bid farewell to the summer term, we'll revisit recent highlights, while also looking ahead to the upcoming winter term, which promises exciting new research and academic exchange.

This newsletter opens with an interview with Prof. Dr. Andreas Wirsching, one of the directors of KFG. In the interview, he discusses the KFG's work and explains the theoretical foundations guiding it.

Earlier presentations from KFG colloquia and conferences are available on the website of the KFG partner, the L.I.S.A. Science Portal. A selection of these informative talks is linked in the following section of the newsletter

The final segment of the newsletter looks ahead to the KFG's upcoming events. Please note that additional workshops, conferences, etc. will be added to the event calendar throughout the term. To stay up to date subscribe to this newsletter if you haven't done so already: kfg20@lrz.uni-muenchen.de.

Interview with Prof. Dr. Andreas Wirsching

The KFG cooperation partners, the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the associated L.I.S.A. Science Portal, asked Andreas Wirsching, one of the three directors, a few questions about the work and the ideas underpinning the KFG's research:

L.I.S.A.: Professor Wirsching, you are one of the three academic directors of the research group 'Universalism and Particularism in Contemporary European History' (KFG) at the LMU Munich. In our interview with your colleagues and co-heads Professor Martin Schulze Wessel and Professor Kiran Klaus Patel, both emphasized that there is no clear assignment of the directors to the three areas of religion, business and human rights. Nevertheless, there are certain responsibilities in terms of content and organization. How would you describe yours?

Wirsching: In any case, I would maintain that there is no personal allocation of the three areas to the three directors. All three of us are genuinely interested in each topic and also (partially) competent in our respective areas of research. The fact that I have now taken on responsibility for the topic of 'human rights' is a pragmatic decision resulting from the nature of the work.

L.I.S.A.: Human rights, by their very conceptualization, are universal: Rights that (should) apply equally to all people. The KFG uses the term universalism in its title, but also the term particularism. How do human rights fit in with the latter? Can particular human rights exist at all?

Wirsching: The 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' of the United Nations (UN) of December 1948 was based on a holistic, i.e. all-encompassing and therefore also static concept of universalism. The UN's official human rights policy basically follows this approach to this day, for example when universal human rights are brought into a common framework with particular cultural rights. Universalism and cultural 'diversity' (or particular positions) are thus not seen as mutually exclusive, but as complementary and therefore harmonized. Today, the optimism that once underpinned this interpretation of human rights is gone. We are observing increasing hostility towards the universalist principle of human rights, often emanating from authoritarian political systems, but also in the name of 'traditional values' such as the 'protection of the family', which addresses the central issue of the role of women, or 'religious freedom'. For the KFG, it is crucial that we develop a dynamic concept of universalism. [...]

L.I.S.A.: Human rights are always a current political issue. [...] What contribution can historiography make to understanding the emergence of human rights and how they are dealt with?

Wirsching: Firstly, historians can and should work out the respective historical constellations under which human rights were codified, criticized and violated. Significant details are very important here. During the final drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, for example, the Indian representative Hansa Mehta successfully insisted that Article 1 should not refer to 'men', as originally formulated, but to 'human beings'. [...]

Secondly, historians are called upon to analyze the aforementioned change in human rights and their material claim to validity. [...]

Thirdly, the difficult question arises as to how far historical science can and should also represent normative positions. Personally, I believe that a completely non-normative position is hardly possible. [...]

The complete interview (in German) is accessible on [L.I.S.A.](#)

Access the KFG's work online

As part of the aforementioned cooperation with the Gerda Henkel Stiftung's L.I.S.A. Science Portal we continuously upload contributions from the KFG's conferences and semesterly colloquia. Lectures of previous terms include:

- Frank Bösch's lecture "Die Deutschen und die Diktaturen. Außenpolitik und Menschenrechte seit der Ära Adenauer" at the KFG's conference "Human Rights: Between Universalism and Particularism"
- Filip Batselé's lecture on "Universalizing the Rules of Investment Protection: Making the Eastern Bloc 'Safe' for Western European Investment 1976–1999"
- Nadieszka Kizenko's lecture on "The Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine: Language and Liturgy as Universal or Particularistic Choices"
- Hélène Miard-Delacroix's lecture on "Emotions in 1989. The Secularized Emotional Regime in France and Germany Facing the World's Turmoil"

Events

a. Research Insights: Fellows' Colloquium and Lecture Series

In the upcoming term, the KFG is planning for its fellows to present their research in a **colloquium** and, for the first time, in a **lecture series**. We will upload all programs to our [website](#) in the coming weeks.

To get the reading material for each session, please contact us: kfg20@lrz.uni-muenchen.de.

If you would like to receive regular information about the colloquium and other KFG events, please subscribe to the newsletter by emailing kfg20@lrz.uni-muenchen.de.

b. Workshops

As in previous terms, the KFG will organize **Interdisciplinary** and **Junior Fellow Workshops**.

The next **Junior Fellow Workshop** will be organized by [Ida Richter](#) together with Katrin Antweiler from the University of the Bremen. It is entitled "Taking Stock of the Holocaust-Human Rights Nexus: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives". Participants of the workshop include Mirjam Zadoff (Munich) and A. Dirk Moses (New York) among others.

The workshop will take place on **September 9–10** at the **Historicum (Schellingstraße 12, 80799 Munich)** in room K226.

To register, please contact us at kfg20@lrz.uni-muenchen.de.

Further workshops will be announced on the KFG [website](#).

c. Conference:

Upcoming: Memory Rights and Memory Wrongs

The KFG is pleased to announce the upcoming conference "[Memory Rights and Memory Wrongs](#)", organized in cooperation with the KFG partner, [the Academy for European Human Rights Protection](#). Participants of the conference will include **Angelika Nußberger** (Cologne), **Marta Bucholc** (Warsaw), **Miroslaw Sadowski** (Warsaw), the KFG directors as well as many more.

The conference will take place on **September 11–12** at the **Internationales Begegnungszentrum der Wissenschaft IBZ (Amalienstraße 38, 80799 Munich)**. Participation is possible in person or online. To register, please contact us at kfg20@lrz.uni-muenchen.de.

You can find the [full program](#) on the KFG website.

Previously: Human Rights: Between Universalism and Particularism

The report on the conference titled "Human Rights: Between Universalism and Particularism," held at the [Institut für Zeitgeschichte](#) on June 6 and 7, has now been published on H-Soz-Kult and can be accessed [here](#).