

Co-Conveners: Duke University, Department of History, and UNC-Chapel Hill,  
Department of History

### Friday, 9 October 2020

4:00–5:30 pm | Online

## BILL SHARMAN

Doctoral Candidate, Duke University,  
Department of History



# “Third-World” Refugees, Rights, and West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s

During the 1970s and 80s, tens of thousands of refugees from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia began seeking asylum in West Germany each year. While scholars have examined how the West German media, state, and society responded to refugee “crises,” this talk draws on archival sources, documentary films, poetry, and oral histories to examine the intellectual and social worlds of refugees themselves. As individuals and in groups, a number of non-European refugees developed critiques of nationalism and racism, denounced refugee encampments as contrary to international law and democracy, and made legal claims to asylum. These assertions recast immigration as a matter of rights—and not merely of contract labor or humanitarian compassion—and altered perceptions about West Germany’s place in the post-1945 world.

**BILL SHARMAN** is doctoral candidate at Duke University, where he studies modern European, African, and global history. He is working on a dissertation called “Moral Politics: Global Humanitarianism, the Third World, and West Germany.”

**Moderator: JAKOB NORBERG** | Duke University, Department of German Studies

For more information on the NCGS program and the Zoom access go to the NCGS website: <https://ncgsws.web.unc.edu/>

**CONTACT:** Karen Hagemann | UNC-Chapel Hill, Dept. of History, email: [hagemann@unc.edu](mailto:hagemann@unc.edu)

**CONVENERS:** Duke University: Dept. of German Studies | Dept. of History | The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Carolina Seminars | Carolina Center for Jewish Studies | Dept. of Germanic and Slavic Languages & Literatures | Dept. of History