

## Call for Papers

### **Law and Order: Modes of Policing and Resistance in American History**

Annual Conference of the Historians of the German Association for American Studies (GAAS/DGfA)

Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz  
Unter den Linden 8  
10179 Berlin

May 8-10, 2026

Organizers: Helen A. Gibson (Universität Erfurt / Freie Universität Berlin) and Sebastian Jobs (Freie Universität Berlin)

Keynote speaker: Mia Bay (University of Cambridge)

Some of the most controversial debates in American politics over the past several years have revolved around modes of law enforcement and policing. Abortion has been rendered illegal in numerous U.S. states since the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022. Teaching critical race theory (CRT), which draws connections between racism and American legal institutions, has been criminalized in states across the country. Violent practices of policing Americans who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) have led some to demand defunding the police. Opponents of antiracist teaching, meanwhile, have criticized the insights of Black Studies, African American Studies, Pan-African Studies and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) Studies as left-wing attempts to police and suppress freedom of speech and have dismissed them as mere political correctness or wokeness.

This conference will address the trajectory of these recent events by focusing on phenomena and institutions that highlight the long history of policing and resistance in the United States and North America at large. We invite scholars to contribute their insights on the topic of policing in fields from legal history to social history, cultural history, and neighboring disciplines. We are especially interested in submissions that foreground historically marginalized knowledge and standpoints, and that are self-reflexive in their framing.

Questions include:

- How are the juridical, economic, ethical and symbolic dimensions of policing rooted in practices of violence?
- How do modes of resistance, evasion, and cooperation challenge and reaffirm existing frameworks of power?
- How have specific actors and institutions of law and order evolved over time?

Possible topics include:

- Practices of policing and surveillance
- Institutions of governance and jurisdiction
- Epistemic reparations and redress for slavery, disappropriation of Indigenous land
- Discourses of 'political correctness,' 'wokeness,' and 'cancel culture'
- Border construction and protection, immigration
- Religious forms of discipline
- Policing of gender and sexuality

We also warmly invite early career scholars to submit an abstract in applying for the Young Scholars Forum, where you can discuss aspects of your dissertation project irrespective of the project's pertinence to the general conference theme. We will publish a Call for Papers for the Young Scholars Forum later this year.

Please send your paper abstract (250 - 500 words) and a short CV (one page) as one pdf file to the conference organizers by September 15, 2025: [helen.gibson@fu-berlin.de](mailto:helen.gibson@fu-berlin.de) and [sebastian.jobs@fu-berlin.de](mailto:sebastian.jobs@fu-berlin.de). You will be notified of acceptance by October 2025.