

Martin Luther King Day Lecture 2017

in cooperation with AmerikaHaus e.V. NRW

**NORTH
AMERICAN
STUDIES
PROGRAM**

Prof. Dr. Anke Ortlepp
University of Kassel

AmerikaHaus
NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN

Air Travel, Black Consumers, and U.S. Citizenship: The Struggle for Desegregation of American Airports

Monday, January 16, 2017 | 6:00–8:00 pm
Festsaal, Main building, Regina-Pacis-Weg 3



Free to enjoy equal access to the aircraft cabin in the postwar period, African Americans encountered racially segregated airports in the American South. Black travelers were barred from eating at airport restaurants and sharing facilities like waiting rooms, restrooms, and water fountains with white travelers. Prof. Ortlepp's talk will explore how travelers and civil rights organizations fought against this form of racial discrimination in air travel. It will investigate direct action protests at terminals (like sit-ins and demonstrations) and lawsuits against airports. It will show how black activists used their power as citizen-consumers to gain equal ground access to the air travel experience.

Anke Ortlepp is professor of British and North American history at the University of Kassel. Her current research focuses on the history of American race relations and the history of segregation. Her book *Jim Crow Terminals: The Desegregation of American Airports* is forthcoming with the University of Georgia Press.

The talk will be followed by a short reception.