

Conference „(Post-)colonialism between Cameroon and Germany. Science, Knowledge and Justice“

19-20 September 2011

Venue: Goethe-Universität Frankfurt/Main; Campus WestEnd, Casino room 1.801

In the past few years, Germany has witnessed a renewed interest for its own colonial history. This was also marked by methodological-theoretical dialogue between Anglo-American and German research approaches. The importance for Germany of its own colonial past, both in terms of representation and of its invention as a nation has shifted to the centre of discussion. Recent work seeks to approach German colonial history from a global historical perspective, in the attempt of overcoming the legacy of centre-periphery models. Connections and interrelations between Europe and the rest of the world are emphasised and the two areas are observed in their „shared history“ (Cooper/Stoler) as one analytical field. The objective of these new approaches is the overcoming of eurocentric perspectives on colonial history and thereby the „provincialisation“ of Europe. It should however be noted that in this system of knowledge that is beginning to take shape, scholars from former German colonial territories (i.e. Cameroon) are still disconcertingly underrepresented. This is so despite the longstanding and lively debates about German colonial history that take place in the former colonies, both in the academic and non-academic environment. The systems of knowledge relating to the issue that are found in these countries consistently fail to gain resonance or recognition in Germany. In the academic sphere, the cultural hegemony of the global North over the global South has made itself remarkable in a way that not even postcolonialist scholars or critics of eurocentrism have dared to question explicitly. Through their award criteria and capacity-building goals, institutional aid mechanisms strengthen the impression that the North should „develop“ university systems in the South. This perception of academic engagement with colonial history in the South as flawed and thus its lack of recognition prevents dialogue and constructive attitudes towards it in the North. The knowledge produced and circulated in the South is excluded from academic discussion. Knowledge in the North thus remains partial and epistemically flawed. Can „critique of history“ (Soyinka) be achieved as a premise for justice and reconciliation without taking account of former colonies' historiography? And how can dialogue between equal partners truly take place and „fig-leaf-rhetoric“ be avoided?

The conference aims to discuss these questions with scholars of the field who engage with German colonial history in Cameroon. The ultimate goal of the conference is to start a process which will, with regard to Cameroon at first, explore possibilities for bringing different systems of knowledge into the dialogue, for identifying and overcoming structural inequalities and for setting the preconditions for mutual recognition.

Language conference is English; Presentations in French will be translated into English.

Programme:

Monday, 19 September

10.00 Registration

11.15-11.30 Introduction

11.30-13.00 **Opening Lecture: Elements of postcolonial justice: Cameroon and Germany**

(Kum'a Ndumbe III., University of Yaoundé I)

13.00 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30-16.00 Panel I: Historiography (Chair: Ronja Metzger)

- Walter Gam Nkwi (University of Buea): „The Myth of 1916/19 as a historical break in the History of Cameroon and Germany”
- Caroline Authaler (University of Heidelberg): „Historiographies of the German-owned plantations in the anglophone part of Cameroon”

16 – 16.30 Coffee Break

16.30 – 18.00 Panel II: Lieux et Milieux de mémoire (Chair: Parfait Bokohonsi)

- Regina Schleicher (Goethe-University Frankfurt): “Post-colonial Yaoundé”
- Joseph Woudammike (University of Maroua): „Tradition orale et monuments comme source d’écriture de l’histoire allemande au Cameroun”

Evening: guided tour of postcolonial sites in Frankfurt by the group: “frankfurt postkolonial”

Tuesday, 20 September

10.00 – 11.00 Artists’ Space (Chair: Ulrike Hamann)

- Exhibition: “Deutschland schwarz-weiß” (Uwe Jung, Goethe-Institut Yaoundé)
- Uropa in Kamerun (Andréas Lang)

11.00 – 11.15 Coffee Break

11.15 – 12.45 Lecture: Themes in Research and Teaching of German colonialism in Cameroon – the path behind and ahead

(Albert-Pascal Temgoua, University of Yaoundé)

12.45 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 Panel III Methods of researching and teaching (Chair: Susanne Heyn)

- Germain Nyada (Concordia University, Canada): “‘German colonialism was not that bad!’ Cameroon, Colonial Memory and German Legacy”
- Sylvie Bambona (University of Yaoundé): “Recension des travaux de recherche sur l’histoire coloniale allemande à l’Ecole Normale Supérieure de Yaoundé et dans les lycées”
- Ulrike Schaper (FU Berlin): “European Experts and African objects of study? The production of knowledge on African laws in the German colony Cameroon”

15.30-16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 – 18.00 Panelist Discussion: Shared or Divided History? (Chair: Stefanie Michels)

Panelists:

Andreas Eckert (Humboldt University, Berlin)

Hans-Peter Hahn (Goethe-University, Frankfurt/Main)

Albert-Pascal Temgoua (University of Yaoundé)

Kum'a Ndumbe III. (University of Yaoundé)

Astrid Erll (Goethe-University, Frankfurt/Main) (subject to approval)

All participants are kindly requested to register for the event.

In order to register, please send your registration to enregistrement.postcolonial@gmail.com

Registration fees before 02/09/2011 are reduced:

- 23 € (rate for students/unemployed);
- 33 € (regular rate).

Please send the fees to the following bank account:

deutschland postkolonial - erinnern und versöhnen; Sparkasse KölnBonn, BLZ 370 501 98; Account No.: 1900407113. SWIFT-BIC: COLSDE33; IBAN: DE02 3705 0198 1900 4071 13

Registration at the conference desk will be possible at the following rates:

- 26 € (rate for students/unemployed)
- 36 € (regular rate).

Fees cover lunch, beverages, snacks at the conference and the guided city walk (including public transport)

If you wish to participate in the conference's dinner (at own expense) please indicate with your registration.