

International Conference: Colonialism as Shared History. Past, Present, Future.



7-9 October 2020, Berlin (digital conference)

'Africa', 'Asia' and 'Oceania' are no longer objects of European history and European decision-making. In the post-colonial age of globalization, we are facing an era of ever closer political, economic, social and cultural interdependence, but also strong ruptures in societies around the world. In order to better shape our future together, we also need to come to a common understanding of our history – in the sense of a shared history, although not necessarily assessed equally in all parts. We need political, cultural and academic exchanges, including disputes about the colonial past in order to come to a better mutual understanding of our colonial history and of the strong roots of racism.

Meanwhile controversial public debates about the colonial past have been going on for decades in almost all countries, the debate in Europe has intensified only recently. We are witnessing public debates about an entangled global history and the question of how to deal with the material and immaterial witnesses of such an interconnectedness. These debates take place in universities and museums, in theatres, literature and newspapers, in parliaments or civil society initiatives and on the streets. The focus lies on questions about the restitution of colonial objects, the impact of colonialism and racism, and different ways of reading history.

However, remembering and coming to terms with a shared history can only be successful if the demand for a discussion on equal terms does not remain an empty promise. To this end, it must be possible to create a diverse and heterogeneous space of memory, the arts, and research, which deepens existing cooperation and opens up new forms of cooperation.

The aim of the conference is, therefore, to bring together research, the arts and civil society – namely from the former colonies and Germany – in order to question the past, present and future of colonial memory. What could a shared history look like? The conference should help to concretize and set in motion co-operative research.

Organisation: Bettina Brockmeyer, Rebekka Habermas, Ulrike Lindner in co-operation with the Gerda Henkel Foundation and with support of the German Federal Foreign Office.

All times given are in the time zone UTC+2.

**7 October:
Conference Opening, Keynote, First Panel**



2 pm

Opening remarks | via ZOOM | English

PD Dr. Bettina Brockmeyer, Prof. Dr. Rebekka Habermas,
Prof. Dr. Ulrike Lindner

Introduction

Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office **Michelle Müntefering**

Keynote Lecture

Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Writer, Nairobi, Kenya

"Derelict Shards: The Roamings of Colonial Phantoms"

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Rebekka Habermas**, Historian, Göttingen, Germany

3 pm

Coffee break

3.30 pm

Technical introduction | via ZOOM | English

Conference Organizer

3:45 pm

Conference introduction | via ZOOM | English

PD Dr. Bettina Brockmeyer
Prof. Dr. Rebekka Habermas
Prof. Dr. Ulrike Lindner

7 October:
Conference Opening, Keynote, First Panel



4 pm

1st Panel: Shared History: Colonialism | via ZOOM | English

The panel analyses the impact of colonialism both on overseas colonies and on Europe. It focuses on local contexts, states and organisations, highlighting the agency of people and economic, political and social dynamics. Furthermore, it should reflect that colonial involvement takes place in a trans-imperial context.

Prof. Dr. Michelle Moyd, Historian, Bloomington, USA: 'African Sovereignties and "Counterinsurgency" in German East Africa, 1890-1908'

Prof. Dr. Bertram Mapunda, Archaeologist, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: „Can Colonialism Ever Have a Positive Element? A Reflection on the Three Decades of German Colonial Rule in Tanganyika“

Dr. Kokou Azamede, Historian, Lomé, Togo: "The impact of German colonialism in West African societies. The case of Togo and Ghana"

Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Buettner, Historian, Amsterdam, Netherlands: "Remaking Europe Through Migration: Colonial Legacies in Context"

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Andreas Eckert**, Historian, Berlin, Germany

8 October:
Second and Third Panel



2 pm

2nd Panel: Shared History: Post-colonialism | via ZOOM | English

Both in the former colonies as well as in Germany and Europe we are today confronted with the manifold and powerful legacies of colonialism and racism - cultural assets and artefacts, knowledge and human remains, language and linguistic usage, monuments and street names, collective memory and political relations. Thus, it is necessary to critically question collections, museums, knowledge and politics and to reveal their genealogies and underlying racist conceptions.

Prof. Dr. Andrew Zimmerman, Historian, Washington, USA: "Robbery, Representation, Restitution, and Destruction"

Prof. Dr. Ciraj Rassool, Historian, African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies, Cape Town, South Africa: "Restitution, decolonisation and the work of undoing race in the museum"

Joshua Kwesi Aikins, Research Associate, Development Policy and Postcolonial Studies, Kassel, Germany

Chair: **Prof. Dr. Ulrike Lindner**, Historian, Cologne, Germany

3.30 pm

Coffee break

4 pm

3rd Panel: Shared History: Projects | via ZOOM | English

For a long time, Europeans held the sovereignty of interpretation over colonial history in academia as well as in some wider audiences. This panel explores how the history of colonial violence, economies and knowledge production can be reappraised without the creation of new hierarchies. How can we develop, write, and communicate a shared history? What are the possibilities and limits of such a history?

Dr. Manuela Bauche and Christian Kopp, Historians, Berlin, Germany: "Bridging Divides? Collaborative Projects, Entangled Injustices and German Memory Politics"

Dr. Michael Mel, Artist, Curator, Goroka, Papua New Guinea

Prof. Dr. Susanne Freund and Uwe Jung, Archival Sciences, Potsdam, Germany: "The Archive Guide to German Colonial Past - An opportunity for dehierarchized access to documents"

Chair: **PD Dr. Stefanie Michels**, Historian, Hamburg, Germany

9 October:
Fourth Panel and Public Discussion



12 pm

4th Panel: Shared Future | via ZOOM | English

This panel asks how a common future can be shaped. Which possible role models exist, which ideas and previous realisations help to build sustainable projects, institutions and spaces for reflection? This panel focuses on existing and planned events, alliances and network ideas.

Flower Manase, Curator, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: "The future of Africa-Europe 'collaboration' on shared history"

PD Dr. Bettina Brockmeyer, Historian, Erlangen & Hamburg, Germany: "Proposal for a Center for Research on Colonialism and Racism"

Prof. Dr. David Simo, German Studies, Yaoundé, Kamerun: "Is it possible to imagine collaborative knowledge productions to resist existing asymmetric structures?"

Chair: **Jun.-Prof. Dr. Ulrike Schaper**, Historian, Berlin, Germany

1.15 pm

Concluding remarks | via ZOOM | English

PD Dr. Bettina Brockmeyer, Prof. Dr. Rebekka Habermas,
Prof. Dr. Ulrike Lindner

(End of internal workshop)

1.30 pm

Lunch break

2 pm

Public Panel Discussion: Dealing with the legacies of colonialism and racism in a shared future

Live stream | German (simultaneous translation in English)

Dr. Ibou Diop, Romance Studies, Berlin, Germany

Prof. Dr. Albert Gouaffo, German Studies, Dschang, Cameroon

Prof. Dr. Ulrike Lindner, Historian, Cologne Germany

Jackie Thomae, Writer, Berlin, Germany

Hadija Haruna-Oelker, Independent Journalist

Chair: **René Aguigah**, Deutschlandradio Kultur