

COLONIALISM WITHOUT COLONIES

International Workshop

Villa Hatt, ETH Zurich, 14.–15. June 2013

This workshop explores the concept of “colonialism without colonies” from two main perspectives: First, we look at countries that were not colonized but situated next to colonies (Nepal, Iran, Ethiopia and Liberia). How were these places affected by colonialism, in what way can they be seen as “quasi-colonies” and thus as part of the colonial constellation? How did their situation differ from the neighboring colonies; did they possibly emerge as places of resistance to colonialism? What effects does the history of having been “on the margins” of colonialism have on the postcolonial present?

Second, we examine countries that were close to the metropolises without having been formal colonial powers (Austria, Latvia, Iceland and Switzerland). How were these places entangled in the colonial endeavor, how did they manage to profit from it and in what ways did their involvement in colonialism differ from those of the ‘official’ colonial powers? How do narratives of having been “outside of colonialism” influence and complicate contemporary debates on the postcolonial heritage in these places?

Finally, the question of whether a country belonged to the colonial regime or not is itself an object of debate: Is Ethiopia the only African country that was never colonized; or

does the Italian occupation between 1935-41 constitute an especially cruel example of European colonialism? Was Austria outside of the colonial context; or does its Habsburg past necessitate approaching it within the framework of imperialism? Does the fact that Iceland was a Danish colony mean that it needs to be seen as a former colony only; or does it need to be contextualized within the European colonial metropolises? How can we interpret the position of Liberia as an American colony, an independent Republic and the imagined centre of an African Empire?

The workshop treats these questions in different studies related to eight specific countries. There is a strong focus on the interconnection of power and knowledge, as well as on the cultural effects of colonialism, that is in the ways in which colonial images and perspectives influenced and still do affect political, popular as well as scientific discourses in these places. A strong emphasis is further put on the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, religion and class. For all these aims, postcolonial studies prove to be an important point of reference.

The over-arching aim of the workshop is to develop, discuss and test the epistemic value and the heuristic reach of the concept of “colonialism without colonies”.

Program

FRIDAY, 14TH OF JUNE

13.30h

Francesca Falk, Barbara Luethi and Patricia Purtschert: Welcome Note and Introduction

FOCUS 1: NATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COLONIES

14.00h

Sara Elmer (ETH Zurich): “Deprived from the civilizing achievements of colonialism”: The postcoloniality of non-colonialism in Nepal’s development discourse

14.30h

Sven Trakulhun (University of Zurich): Outside in the Colonial Machine? Thailand as an Imperialist Colony

15.00h

Response and Discussion

Respondant: Kien Nghi Ha (University of Bremen)

16.00h

Coffee break

16.30h

Saheed Yinka Adejumobi (Seattle University): Empires and Utopias: Ethiopia, Colonial Encounters and Visions of Freedom in the Modern World

17.00h

Christine Whyte (University of Bielefeld): “We have the germ of an African empire”: Pan-African visions of Liberia, 1865

17.30h

Response and Discussion

Respondant: Serena Dankwa (University of Berne)

SATURDAY 15TH OF JUNE

FOCUS 2: NATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE METROPOLIS

10.00h

Belinda Kazeem (University of Vienna): „What was – What is – What stays: Traditional Representations of Black people in Austria“

10.30h

Dace Dzenovska (University of Oxford): Historical Agency and the Coloniality of Power in Postsocialist Europe

11.00h

Response and Discussion

Respondant: Sushila Mesquita (University of Vienna)

12.00h

Lunch break

13.30h

Kristín Loftsdóttir (University of Iceland): “In Cuba they have a McDonald’s Place”: Icelandic Post-Colonial Anxieties in the Aftermath of the Economic Crisis in 2008

14.00h

Patricia Purtschert (ETH Zurich): From Alpine guides to ‘Sahibs’ in the Himalayas: The Swiss and the mountains in a postcolonial context

14.30h

Response and Discussion

Respondant: Noémi Michel (University of Geneva)

15.30

Coffee break

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION: COLONIALISM WITHOUT COLONIES

16.00–18.00h

Inputs: Elisio Macamo (University of Basel), Madeleine Herren-Oesch (University of Basel)

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Organized by Francesca Falk (University of Fribourg),
Barbara Luethi (University of Cologne), and
Patricia Purtschert (ETH Zurich)

Assistance: Marina Lienhard and Jovita dos Santos Pinto (ETH Zurich)

Guests: Rohit Jain (University of Zurich), Anne Lavanchy (University of
Edinburgh), Angela Sanders (University of Neuchâtel), Damir Skendero-
vic (University of Fribourg), Katharina Morawek and Can Cülsü (Shedhal-
le Zurich)

Supported by:



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GESCHICHTE DES WISSENS

and Swiss National Science Foundation