CALL FOR PAPERS

Entangled Legacies: Enlightenment, Colonialism and the Holocaust

28th and 29th September 2012

International Workshop
Frankfurt Research Center for Postcolonial Studies
“Excellence Cluster: The Formation of Normative Orders”
Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany

Organized by

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Keynotes: Aamir Mufti (UCLA) & Ella Shohat (NYU)

Inputs: Anaheed Al-Hardan, Micha Brumlik, Liliana Ruth Feierstein, Birgit Rommelspacher, Jürgen Zimmerer (tbc)

What are the links between the gruesome atrocities committed during colonialism and the Third Reich? Do colonialism and the Holocaust signal a failure of European Enlightenment or are they both outcome of the “Project of Modernity”? Or was it the Enlightenment that provided the tools to contest Empire and Fascism? How would memory politics and geopolitics be transformed through a simultaneous analysis of the legacies of colonialism and the Holocaust?

Instead of rendering colonialism marginal to Holocaust studies and the Holocaust to Postcolonial Studies, new scholarship exploring important links between imperialism and European Fascism is emerging. Issues ranging from “concentration camps” in the German colonies to racial ideologies and fantasies of supremacy are being extensively investigated. Some commentators, however, remain sceptical about these comparisons and challenge the continuity thesis by emphasising Holocaust uniqueness. These positions raise questions whether the Holocaust can be juxtaposed to other experiences of extreme historical violence. Other scholars emphasize connections between colonial rule and the Nazi regime by examining how colonialism was fuelled by and in turn reinforced perceptions of
European racial superiority. Furthermore the link between the loss of German overseas colonies and Nazi expansionism in Eastern Europe as a form of “internal colonization” is highlighted. Seminal work by critics like Hannah Arendt and Aimé Césaire unfold the links between the events of the First and Second World Wars and imperialism, thereby opening up possibilities for a broader understanding of genocide, which encompasses both colonialism as well as the Holocaust.

Cognizant of the specificity of the German context and history, the aim of this workshop is to contribute to the emerging critical field that seeks to think together the legacies of colonialism and the Holocaust. Confronting shared issues like “Paradox of Modernity”, “Biopolitics”, “Decolonization” and “Anti-Fascism”, “Gender and Sexual Politics”, the workshop explores how Postcolonial Studies and Holocaust Studies can productively work together to unfold the violence exercised in the name of racial ideologies and imperial political projects. The discussions will revolve around exploring both the differences and similarities between various genocidal instances of world history and the consequences for remembrance politics in a postcolonial world.

Submission of Paper Proposals

We invite paper proposals that examine the entangled legacies of colonialism and the Holocaust. Please submit abstracts (max. 350 words) and a short bio-note (max. 100 words) by 15th June 2012 to: frcps.mail@googlemail.com.

If your conference proposal is accepted, you must submit a written paper by 31st August 2012. All proposals, presentations and papers must be in English.

A limited number of travel bursaries will be provided for paper presenters (preference will be given to applicants from the global South). Please motivate your application for travel funding in a short accompanying letter (max. 300 words).

Registration

Only limited seats are available for participants not presenting a paper, so if you wish to take part we request a letter of motivation outlining your interest in the workshop until 15th June 2012 to be sent to: frcps.mail@googlemail.com

Confirmations for both paper presentations and workshop attendance will be sent out by 15th July 2012.