

2. Konferenz des Netzwerks Flüchtlingsforschung

4.-6. Oktober 2018
am Zentrum Flucht und Migration in Eichstätt

Call for Papers for the panel
“War, Colonial rule and International Organizations. Refugee hosting before 1951”

The history of refugee hosting and management did not start with the Geneva convention and the foundation of UNHCR. The crucial post-war period has received wider academic attention only recently. In this panel we want to look at the actors, convictions and circumstances that shaped the institutions, legislation and procedures established to take care of refugees during and after World War Two. This period saw the establishment of international organizations (most importantly UNRRA and IRO) that based their policies on universalist principles and social scientific expertise. They nevertheless operated in a world of unquestioned economic and legal inequalities. Colonial rule was still a viable and widespread mode of government in many parts of the world and the antisemitic and racist ideology of Nazism was just collapsing.

The aftermath of the war witnessed not only the largest refugee movements thus far, it saw the development of innovative methods and approaches to this problem as well. More than ten million displaced persons (DPs) were sheltered in camps across Europe and millions of ethnic German expellees and evacuees arrived in war-ravaged Germany. China saw further millions of people displaced in the aftermath of the war and the 1947 partition of India caused massive displacement again. Some have described even the early UNHCR as a ‘colonial era institution’¹ and its predecessors’ Eurocentrism has been widely criticized.² In this panel we want to take a closer look.

Guiding questions will be:

How did the welfare workers in these institutions act between the poles of the colonial ‘politics of difference’³ and universalist ideas of the equality of all human beings? Who was categorized as eligible refugee and came thus under the mandate of international organizations and who was declared ‘ineligible’? And how did general rules of play out on the ground? How did different groups of displaced interact with each other, host societies, welfare professionals and governments?

Case studies or conceptual papers addressing this period in Germany, Europe and elsewhere are invited and shall be brought into conversation. Please send an abstract (English or German, ca. 250 words) before 25 March 2018.

Panel organizer: Jochen Lingelbach, Universität Leipzig, j.lingelbach@gmx.net

- 1 Glen Peterson, ‘The Uneven Development of the International Refugee Regime in Postwar Asia: Evidence from China, Hong Kong and Indonesia’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 3 (2012): 2.
- 2 Anna Holian and G. Daniel Cohen, ‘Introduction’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 3 (2012): 313–25; See also J. Olaf Kleist, ‘The History of Refugee Protection: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges’, *Journal of Refugee Studies* 30, no. 2 (2017): 161–69.
- 3 Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 23.