The study of European decolonization in Africa and Asia is not a new field of historical enquiry. There are good reasons to suggest that it emerged almost simultaneously with the momentous developments leading up to the establishment of newly independent countries in the Southern hemisphere. However, in the last ten years, the study of decolonization has evolved into one of the most dynamic and thought-provoking areas of research, both in terms of empirical findings as well as in regard to theoretical and methodological diversity. Given the magnitude of the epochal changes and the prominent place decolonization occupies in the history of the twentieth century, it is appropriate, and indeed, indispensable, to both consider the results of recent scholarship in a comparative perspective, and to move forward to novel fields of enquiry.

It is sufficient here to name but a few of the fascinating trends visible in contemporary decolonization studies: the appropriation of ‘subaltern’ perspectives by imperial historians; the fruitful integration of ‘orientalist’ as well as post-modern approaches into political, social, economic and cultural history; and a general understanding of the importance to perceive decolonization not simply as a transfer of power but as a multi-layered process of social, economic, cultural, and political transformation. Last but not least, studies of decolonization are beginning to conceive of this transformation as not simply a phenomenon pertinent to African and Asian societies. It is now increasingly regarded as a process which equally affected European societies, not only in terms of international relations, but also in terms of domestic politics, questions of identity and social relations.

‘Modernization’ was a widely accepted concept and a vision of the time. ‘Modernization’ operated on many levels, ranging from the local to the global, and it was propagated by very different actors: by village leaders throughout Africa, the Middle East and Asia; by nationalists who framed their vision of the nation state in modernist concepts and language; by Europeans who transformed discredited notions of the ‘civilizing mission’ into European-defined concepts of modernity; and by Cold War actors who competed for sympathies and allegiances in the emerging ‘Third World’. ‘Modernization’ meant organization, planning, social engineering, the destruction of ‘tradition’ and ‘nation building’. ‘Modernization’ had multiple meanings which need to be explored from a comparative perspective.

Site Map Main Building (Hauptgebäude), Ground Floor (Erdgeschoss).

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Trajectories of Decolonization:
Elites and the Transformation from the Colonial to the Postcolonial

University of Cologne
Main Building/Hauptgebäude
New Senate Meeting Room/Neuer Senatssaal

Thursday, October 9 – Saturday, October 11, 2008

Convenors
Jost Dülffer, Köln; Marc Frey, Bremen

Sponsors
Fritz Thyssen Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Association of Friends and Supporters of the University of Cologne, German Historical Institute Paris, German Historical Institute London, German Historical Institute Washington, D.C., Commission for the History of International Relations
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9

09:30 Coffee

10:00 WORDS OF WELCOME
Just Dülffer and Marc Frey
Hans-Peter Ullmann (Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts), University of Cologne
Andreas Geistrich (Director), German Historical Institute, London

INTRODUCTION
Just Dülffer and Marc Frey

10:30 Panel I: Indigenous Elites in Asia and the Middle East – Old and New
Chair: Dietmar Rothermund, University of Heidelberg
Southeast Asian Elites and the Construction of the ‘Nation’
Paul Kratoska, National University of Singapore
Negotiating Decolonization in the Classroom: Franco-Lebanese Interaction in the 1940s
Esther Möller, Jacobs University Bremen
Nehru - the dilemmas of a colonial inheritance
Judith Brown, University of Oxford

12:45 Lunch

14:30 Panel II: Metropolitan Elites and the End of Empire
Chair: Just Dülffer, University of Cologne
It was not displeasing to be thus assured that I, too, was decolonizable: European Colonials and the End of Empire in Comparative Context
Elizabeth Buetner, York University
Dutch Elites and the End of Empire
Marc Frey, Jacobs University Bremen
French Elites and the wave of decolonization around 1960
Daniel Mollenhauer, Ludwig-Maximilian University Munich

16:30 Coffee

17:00 Keynote Speech
Alternatives to Nationalism: The Political Imagination of Elites in French West Africa, 1945-1960
Frederick Cooper, New York University

19:45 Dinner (for Panelists)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10

09:15 Panel III: Metropolitan, Settler and Transnational Elites and the End of Empire
Chair: Corinna Unger, German Historical Institute, Washington

French Elites and the Decolonization of Indochina
Hugo Tertiais, Université de Paris 1 - Panthéon-Sorbonne
Versoedian Apartheid and African political elites in South Africa, 1950-1968
Christoph Marx, University of Duisburg-Essen

11:00 Coffee

11:20 Panel IV: Military-Administrative Elites
Chair: Benedikt Stuchtey, German Historical Institute, London
South Asian Military Elites in Comparison: Pakistan and India
Margaret S. Porter, University of Indiana, Bloomington
Intelligence Providers and the Fabric of the Late Colonial State
Maxim Thomas, University of Exeter
Drivers of Change: Military-civilian elite units and the search for modern men in the context of colonial wars during the 1950s
Stephan Malinowski, Humboldt University Berlin

13:00 Lunch

15:00 Panel V a: Indigenous Elites in Africa – Old and New
Chair: Margit Szöllösi-Janze, University of Cologne
Chieftaincies and chiefs in northern Namibia: Intermediaries of Power between Traditionalism, Modernisation and Democratisation
Michael Bollig, University of Cologne
Parcours de l’instituteur sénégalais de la post-colonie : vers une sortie de l’élite ?
Ousseynou Faye, Université C.A Diop, Dakar

16.15 Coffee break

15:00 Panel V b: Indigenous Elites in Africa – Old and New
Chair: Marc Frey, Jacobs University, Bremen
Sekou Touré and the Management of Elites in Guinea
Mairi S. MacDonald, University of Toronto
Julius Nyerere and the Project of African Socialism
Andreas Eckert, Humboldt University Berlin

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11

09:30 Panel VI: Economic elites: Renegotiating the market space from the local to the global
Chair: Jakob Vogel, University of Cologne
Liverpool business elites and the end of empire
Nicholas White, Liverpool John Moores University
Emerging business elite in newly independent Indonesia
J. Thomas Lindblad, University of Leiden

10:45 Coffee

11:00 Panel VII: The Cold War and Elites of the Third World
Chair: Anja Kruke, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Bonn
The Soviet Union and the Socialist camp: Elite formation for the Third World
Andreas Hilger, University of Hamburg
United States, decolonization and the education of Third World elites
Corinna Unger, German Historical Institute, Washington, DC

13:00 Lunch

15:00 Roundtable Discussion
Commentators
Just Dülffer, University of Cologne
Dietmar Rothermund, University of Heidelberg

16:30 Coffee

19:30 Dinner (for Panelists)