

Arbeitskreis-Deutsche-England-Forschung / German Association for the Study of British History and Politics

ADEF - Annual Conference, Berlin, 19 – 20 May 2017

“Competitors & Companions: Britons and Germans in the World (19th & 20th Century)”

This workshop is concerned with British-German relations beyond government level. While official bilateral relations between Germany and Britain have been thoroughly studied, their ‘unofficial’ connections and interactions await a systematic exploration. These encounters are manifold as Britons and Germans met in various different contexts at home, in Europe, and the wider world and constantly had to define their relationship to one another as either competitors or companions against a third ‘other’. In the colonial sphere a strong sense of a mutual ‘European-ness’ towards the indigenous population could override economic rivalry and cultural differences. Archaeological expeditions or other scientific endeavours could either create transnational collaboration or nationalist competition. Artists, musicians, missionaries, or explorers might be asked to further their countries’ reputation while they sometimes felt closer to their peers and colleagues of other national background. Diplomats representing their nations and pursuing their politics would still share the life and moral index of the diplomatic corps. On the other hand, British and German representatives at multinational organisations or the EU often opted for a surprisingly nationalistic approach and economic, political, and military collaboration was repeatedly undermined by espionage or even sabotage. The varying degrees of competition and/or collaboration were not necessarily in accordance with official policy and diplomatic relations and sometimes in direct contrast to them.

The workshop discusses different aspects of British-German relations between confrontation and cooperation during the 19th and 20th century in a global perspective, while at the same time explores the creation, role, and impact of ‘the other’ and ‘the third’ in the fluctuating construction of companionship and competition.

We invite proposals that investigate examples and case studies of British-German encounter in an international context discussing questions of competition and/or collaboration. All speakers are expected to deliver their papers in English.

The workshop will be held 19-20 May 2017 at the Centre for British Studies (Großbritannienzentrum) at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin.

In the interests of fostering stronger links between scholars in Germany and the United Kingdom and Ireland, the German Historical Institute London will cover travel expenses for accepted speakers travelling in from the British Isles. Accepted speakers from Germany may qualify for bursary to cover travel expenses, depending on funding.

Proposals (in English) should include a brief one-page C.V. and a 250-word abstract of the proposed paper, and are due by 1 March 2017. Submissions and all inquiries should be directed to julia.eichenberg@hu-berlin.de