



»All's well that ends well«

On 24 November 2016, members of the Leibniz Association voted in favour of the accession of ZMO and three other institutes to their association. This marked the final step in the transition of ZMO from a mere »project« to a formally recognised and regularly funded institution. When I asked our office manager to inform all colleagues of this good news, I received the puzzled response: »Again?« While this lukewarm response to the end of a process of vital importance to the centre somewhat puzzled me, it also was very understandable. Just as the process leading up to the crucial evaluations of 2015 had lasted almost two years, so was the decision-making rather protracted: recommendation by the evaluation team, by different bodies of the Science Council, by the Leibniz Association and by the Joint Science Conference. Of course, ZMO fellows had been following each of these steps, and as each had been decisive in its own way, a positive outcome was by now expected. Membership in the Leibniz Association was, in this perspective, only the icing on a cake that had taken longer to prepare than the notoriously labour and time-intensive Christmas Stollen. But what does this membership mean, besides the much-needed recognition and funding? Obviously, any new organisational form demands numerous legal adjustments. However, participating for the first time in the annual convention of the Association opened perspectives on a range of future opportunities and challenges.

First of all, the very warm welcome into the Humanities Section of the Association by a number of colleagues gave a first sense of the chances for future collaboration on a range of topics. Given how difficult it is at times for area studies specialists to meaningfully cooperate with scholars on Europe, this offers a real chance both for us and for the scholars on Europe to engage with each other and to jointly work on conceptual frameworks which integrate non-Western perspectives from the outset. To some extent, we have already been engaged in this exchange through active participation in the Leibniz Research Alliance »Historical Authenticity«. It will be interesting to explore further possibilities in coming years as a full member. Secondly, the convention's agenda addressed a range of issues linked to good academic practice, organisational management, open access, sustainability and citizen science. Many of these were the subject of controversial debate among members. While one always needs time to orient oneself in a new en-

Member of the



vironment, a number of points became clear: There are certainly a number of issues in which ZMO can learn from the experiences of other institutes. Some of the emerging Leibniz structures might offer chances for colleagues in their professional development, such as the extensive Leibniz Mentoring Programme. ZMO also hopes to contribute to some central concerns of the Association, such as internationalisation. Furthermore, the agenda revealed much about what is currently debated not only within the Association but also at German and European levels regarding the development of scientific research, and it is very useful to be privy to such debates. The very open discussion among members revealed a healthy culture of debate which invites active participation.

Thirdly, the Leibniz Association, in alliance with other large scientific associations, is in regular contact with both the German Ministry of Education and Research as well as relevant EU bodies. These are important channels of information, but also of lobbying, not only with regard to future research agendas but also academics' working conditions. Clearly, this will not solve any individual problems instantly, and probably needs a lot of investment in order to promote certain issues, but this might well be worthwhile. Are we entering the »best of all possible worlds«, as was the motto of Leibniz Year 2016, which is nearing its end? We will need time to find out, but we are certainly entering a very interesting space, which is itself still evolving and thus calling for active engagement. We can therefore look forward to a secure institutional future in a friendly and dynamic environment – certainly the best prospect for us.

Ulrike Freitag

In the current ZMO Bulletin we have asked two guests who were at ZMO between October and December 2016 for a view on their stay. Hussam Al Hassoun from Syria is a CrossCulture Scholarship holder of ifa (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations), a programme advocating intercultural exchange and the strengthening of networks between Germany and the Islamic world; Farzana Haniffa, a senior sociology lecturer at the University of Colombo, is a Visiting Research Fellow. This programme, initiated in 2008, invites outstanding postdoctoral researchers whose academic interests relate to ZMO's profile.

»Ich habe mich darin gefunden« // Hussam Al Hassoun

When I met Lena Fritsche, a coordinator of the CrossCulture Programme at the ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) in Stuttgart, she asked me about my host organisation, the ZMO in Berlin. My answer was automatic: »Ich habe mich darin gefunden« (I found myself there).



Meeting of scholarship holders at ifa in Berlin

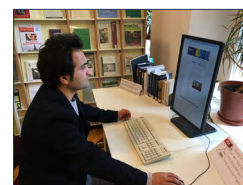


Hussam Al Hassoun is my name. I am a researcher in modern and contemporary history. I was a Ph.D. candidate at Damascus University. I published my Master dissertation under the title of »Al-Wahda al-Suriyya-al-Misriyya wa-Asbab al-infisal 1958-1961: Qira'a Jadida 'Ala Daw' al-Watha'iq al-Haditha« (Syrian-Egyptian Unity and Reasons of Separation 1958-1961: New Approach in the Light of the Modern Documents). I was born in Aleppo where I finished my BA study in History ranking first every year in a row. In 2005 I received the Top Graduate Award. During my MA studies at the University of Damascus I already started working as teaching assistant in the department of history at Aleppo University in 2008.

Ironically, at a time when I feel a very long distance between my country and myself, you find my country everywhere here – even in your flat, when you turn on a TV or on your table close to your breakfast as a few words in a newspaper. It is unfortunate to say that Aleppo became famous more than ever because of the Syrian war. This war revealed the problems and flaws of machinery of the international community and »the effective functioning of human rights mechanisms«. We became part of many studies in history, political and social sciences and so on. We became the subject of articles in the daily press, a subject of debate and for election campaigns, for stories of refugees and a connection to the return of a Cold War, of terrorism and Islamophobia. I find, some of them were written in a boring way or what I would describe as »a search for searches' sake« in some cases.

From the Department of History at the University of Aleppo on 6 July 2014, to the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin on 26 September 2016 is a long way. It was a troubling time that indeed contained the most difficult phase of my life. My memories go fast. The first difficulty I faced was how to get out of Syria when there was no visa for academics to cross the borders. I managed to travel to Antakya in Turkey and lived there for three months. I met a first disappointment when I couldn't find a job at a Turkish research centre and faced the puzzling situation that in order to get a job I needed a residence permit, which required having a passport, which needed renewal, which meant the need to go back to Syria! The next station was Istanbul for a year and three months. My first weeks in a huge city with millions of people who mostly only speak Turkish were without friends or relations and only a little money. This and more was enough to realise what the meaning of the word *hardship* is.

Arriving in Berlin was a long and hard trip. In normal times, you would be extremely crazy if you can't swim and decided to cross open seas, but in insane times, this is sane. From the Greek island of Lesbos, in the northern Aegean Sea off the coast of Turkey, to Athens, via Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, crossing the border to Germany and then



Hussam Al Hassoun at ZMO



from Passau to Berlin – two weeks, thousands of miles and countless difficulties. Even the first weeks in Berlin were not easy; the language was completely new, the difficulties of finding housing, dozens of official papers to fill and so on. But the time and the pursuit of personal goals can

change bad situations. Things began to improve. In Germany, you will not be afraid of the future, as long as you are confident of your abilities. This and the support of my friends, made it possible to start again. I would like to thank them wherever they are, and tell them, I love you all.

In September 2016, when I was preparing to pass the B1 German language level, I got good news that I was selected as an internship holder at ZMO. I was extremely delighted that I was selected among many applicants.

I'm experiencing an academic atmosphere at ZMO that I've always dreamt of in scientific discussions. One that opens closed doors, find solutions for issues and points of view that encourage researchers to articulate or discuss any issue without shame or fear. I would like to point out, as my subject is modern and contemporary history, that comparing the academic atmosphere between my home organisation and my current host, I simply notice a big difference, which can be expressed in one word: freedom. There are no taboos banning research in contemporary history. You can work without feeling intimidated, without the need to imagine yourself wanted by one of the several intelligence branches, fired from work or even put into prison!

The Muslims of Sri Lanka are 9.2% of the population and are demographically located throughout the Island with significant concentrations in the east and the south-west. The extant scholarship on the social and political history of Sri Lanka's Muslim population is quite sparse and chiefly addresses Muslim participation in politics, and that too in a manner inadequately attentive to different Muslim groups' multiple allegiances. None so far have attempted to elucidate the Muslim experience of being defined as an ethnic group and rendered a »minority« by the establishment of the modern nation state. My work illustrates the Muslim experience by taking account of Muslims' demographic dispersal as small and fairly distinct communities across all districts in the country on their engagement with the state and various »others«. Further, the idea of belonging to a global community of coreligionists has shaped the Muslim imagination and how this has impacted their social and political engagement merits sustained inquiry.

Sri Lankan Muslim leaders and social movements constantly negotiate their connection to the global Muslim Umma with being defined as a minority within the Sri Lankan polity. The manner in which such a global community was imagined and the mode of engagement with such a community has varied in keeping with national politics, changes in the larger Muslim world as well as the development of communication and media technologies. This project explores the above themes by looking at ideas of »community« as imagined and aspired to at the following four moments in colonial and post-colonial Sri Lanka.

1 The Moors Islamic Cultural Home (MICH) was founded by a group of socially prominent Muslims in 1944, with a particular vision of Muslims' place in the nation anticipating independence. The organization was established through channelling the »culture« of Islam's past glory – in Alhambra, Spain, for instance – to forge a Sri Lankan Muslim subjectivity in keeping with the aspirations of being »modern« at the moment of independence held by the local postcolonial elite of all religions.

2 Bathiudeen Mahmood was educated at Aligarh University in Colonial India in the 1930s. Mahmood, on his return, befriended later Sri Lankan prime minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and, in 1951, together they founded the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) that successfully mo-



*A group photograph of the officials of MICH Women Section, 1976 (© Moors' Islamic Cultural Home Inc.)*

*Sir Razik Fareed, one of the founders of MICH (© Archives Daily News Sri Lanka)*



bilised the Sinhala vernacular intelligentsia in opposition to the elite United National Party (UNP). In the 1960s, Bathiudeen Mahmood established the Islamic Socialist Front (ISF) using similar rhetoric. Mobilising ideas influencing nationalist movements throughout the Muslim South and Southeast Asia and the Arab world, ISF grew from an understanding of community that rejected wealth accumulation and challenged the leadership of the Muslim trader elite of the UNP and ultimately helped the SLFP-led United Front coalition win the general elections of 1970. 3 Reformist groups that established themselves on the island in the 1950s had an unprecedented rate of success in the 1980s. The first hijab was donated to a Muslim school by the Iranian Embassy and made a part of Muslim girls' school uniform in Mannar in 1988. The Tabligh Jamaath, the Jamathi Islami, from northern India, and several other groups expanded greatly in the ensuing decades during which Sri Lanka was embroiled in a debilitating civil war. Reformists mobilised the idea of the Muslim Umma as Muslims' primary community and encouraged cultivating a social distance from ethnic and religious others as one technique by which piety may be ensured (Haniffa 2008). 4 In the aftermath of the government's 2009

military victory over the Tamil nationalist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Sinhala supremacist Buddhist monks groups began targeting Muslims with the tacit endorsement of the regime. The groups mobilised readily available social media rhetoric about Muslim Jihadist violence to launch their anti-Muslim campaign. The Muslim leadership, caught unawares, were required to mobilise to address this new threat. This moment has significantly shaped the manner in which Muslims see themselves as a distinct community among Sri Lanka's citizens.

My book discusses these four moments in Sri Lanka's larger post-colonial history in order to understand how the local and global has impacted Sri Lankan society and politics through a lens that privileges the experience of Sri Lankan Muslims. While at the ZMO I have been exposed to scholarship on Muslim communities in South and Central Asia and the MENA region that ask a variety of different social and political questions. I have also participated in conversations regarding the South Asian networks that the Muslims I am researching may have been a part of, and the colonial experiences that they may have shared with other Muslim groups. This exposure already informs the manner in which I am framing the questions in this book. The ZMO community's engagement with my work has broadened the international readership on Sri Lankan Muslims. I want to build on these connections and engage in comparative work, especially about Muslim communities that have been defined as minorities by state and nation-building projects. I also plan to engage in collaborative work that more systematically explores the many networks that connect Sri Lankan Muslims with South Asian Islamic groups and the Muslim world in general.

*Farzana Haniffa obtained her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Columbia University, New York in 2007. Her publications and activism during the past 14 years have concentrated on gender politics, the electoral process, Islamic reform movements, post-civil war anti minority sentiment and most recently on Sri Lanka's reconciliation process. In January 2016, Haniffa was appointed by the Prime Minister's Office to the Consultation Task Force on Reconciliation Mechanisms.*

## ■ Conferences & Workshops

### Christians and Muslims in Africa. Towards a Framework for the Study of Multi-Religious Settings, ZMO, 14–20 July 2016



*Get-together for a souvenir photo in front of the ZMO entrance door*

Convened by Birgit Meyer (Utrecht University/ZMO), Abdoulaye Sounaye (ZMO), Marloes Janson (SOAS), and Kai Kresse (Columbia University/visiting fellow BGSMS), this summer school was an initiative of the project *Habitats and Habitus. Politics and Aesthetics of Religious World-Making* hosted at the ZMO. The summer school's main aim

was to further the development of comparative approaches to the study of Christians and Muslims in Africa in order to contribute to an analytical framework for the study of multi-religious settings.

Facing violent conflicts as well as complicated and peaceful entanglements, this conceptual framework is becoming increasingly essential to understanding the shared settings in which Christians and Muslims co-exist in Africa and to »complicate« their similarities and commonalities that are used to distinguish each other. Therefore, there is a need for a multi-disciplinary approach and a reflection about

comparison and comparability with regard to multi-religious settings with detailed historical and ethnographic studies.

This summer school can be seen as a starting point in reaching this aim and 25 invited junior scholars – advanced Ph.D. students and postdocs – from Africa, Europe and the United States engaged in enriching discussions with 20 senior scholars. During the summer school, all Ph.D. students and postdocs presented their work and were able to get feedback. Additionally, there were lectures and panels by senior scholars on various issues such as education, practices of piety, conflict and violence, health and healing, interaction and interfaith marriage, aesthetics and material formations of religion as well as the everyday lives of Christians and Muslims in the public domain. But also more theoretical questions such as the problem of comparison and comparability, diversity and overlaps and the sensitive use of terms and binary logics were addressed. Even the concept of »religion« itself was discussed and questioned and the need for a broader notion of a religious field and further, interdisciplinary and comparative, research stated.

*Noura Chalati*

### The Middle East and North Africa Today: Crises, Mobilities and Paths to the Future, ICS Lisbon, 25–29 July 2016

Last July, Portugal had its first-ever summer school dedicated to the Middle East and North Africa. Hosted by the Institute of Social Sciences (ICS) of Lisbon University, the summer school was organised by Francesco Vacchiano in cooperation with the ZMO, SOAS and London Middle East Institute. It brought together MA and Ph.D. students as well as practitioners in media and civil society with an international team of chairs from Portugal and abroad, featuring Naje Al-Ali (SOAS) as a keynote speaker, and ZMO researcher Samuli Schielke as final speaker. With Katharina Lange and Daniela Swarowsky among the chairs, altogether three current or former ZMO researchers participated in the making of the summer school. Rather than just reproduce political and geostrategic

stakes of Europe and the Global North, the summer school had as its goal to accurate a view over the region with specific attention to people's experiences, forms of organisation and motivations. It aimed at providing an understanding of current social and political dynamics through a perspective centred on people and communities. Additionally, the summer school was part of Francesco Vacchiano's work towards extending Middle East studies as an academic discipline in Portugal. The summer school was an important step in that direction, and plans are already underway to make it an annual event. It's also hoped that it will be the starting point to a long-term cooperation between the ZMO and the ICS and other Portuguese research institutions.

*Samuli Schielke/Francesco Vacchiano*

### Second Euro-Arab Meeting for Young Researchers in Social Sciences, Manama, Bahrain, 26 September – 2 October 2016



*The participants of the summer school (photo by courtesy of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities)*

This meeting brought together eighteen doctoral students from European and Arab academic backgrounds (including Qatar, Oman, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Slovenia, France, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria; students' home countries also included Senegal and Cameroon) came together in the capital of Bahrain, Manama, to present and discuss their dissertation projects in the framework of the Second Meeting of Euro-Arab Researchers in Social Sciences. The meeting was hosted by the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities under its *Knowledge Transfer* project, and directed by Tunisian sociologist, Tahir Labib. Comments and suggestions on each project were provided by a group of five experienced researchers from European and Arab backgrounds. Katharina Lange represented the ZMO in this group.

The projects, which were presented and discussed in Arabic, English and French covered a diverse range of subjects. Among others, presentations addressed the anthropology of the family and sexuality, motivations and constraints of artistic, journalistic and intellectual

production in Arab countries, as well as political transformations, protest and activism. Several contributions, as well as informal discussions among students and with faculty in between sessions, addressed the conditions for academic production in the Arab world. This included questions of political censorship, material hardships, intellectual imperialism and Eurocentrism, as well as gender-specific structural constraints for researchers. Surprisingly, no students or faculty from host country Bahrain participated in the meeting, nor was the Bahraini context discussed in any of the presented case studies.

Despite the noticeable heterogeneity in academic experience and approaches to methodology as well as writing styles and conventions, the meeting succeeded in bringing students into close and sustained conversations, potentially fostering lasting professional and personal contacts between European and Arab scholars. It is to be hoped that this successful project can be continued in future years.

*Katharina Lange*

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## Nouvelles perspectives pour les échanges internationaux de jeunes: Stratégies communes de France, d'Allemagne, d'Algérie, du Maroc et de Tunisie, Marseille, 5-8 October 2016

This workshop and podium discussion, organised by the OFAJ/DFJW (Franco-German Youth Office), was dedicated to the theme of Mediterranean Memories and included the participation of scholars from the TransMed programme such as Mohamed Kerrou, Franck Hoffmann and Markus Messling along with professionals in education and social work and young activists from a variety of countries of the Mediterranean. On the model of the policies that have been enacted between Germany and France during the last six decades, the idea behind this workshop was to reflect on the role of youth exchanges between both shores of the Mediterranean in the promotion of a better understanding between the countries of the region. Discussions were very stimulating and provided an alternative vision to the prevailing one of wars, confrontations and closures. Concrete educational and civil society related projects are developing out of these exchanges.

*Nora Lafi*

OF AJ  
DF JW

## ■ Lecture Series

### Urban Studies Seminar 2016/2017, Annual Theme: Rethinking Urban-Rural Relations in an Age of Migration, Displacement, Environmental Transformations and Fringe Urbanization organised by Ulrike Freitag and Nora Lafi, ZMO

The object of this seminar is to critically revisit the assumed dichotomy between urban and rural ways of life, habits, infrastructures, and actors through scrutinising the links and divisions between the city and the countryside. By bringing together presentations on on-going research from a range of disciplinary, regional and historical backgrounds, the seminar seeks to shed new light on the question of what is urbanity – what makes a city »urban«, and what characterises the countryside as its conceptual Other? What are the decisive, qualitative differences between the two – and what would be the arguments for seeing the urban-rural interface in terms of a continuum, rather than a dichotomy? What role do the availability and usage of material resources play in this relationship, and how do they matter in producing different modes of life?

The series proposes three thematical approaches. The first one gives an overview of extant research and current debates on the urban-rural divide; the second traces social actors' trajectories in and across the assumed boundaries between urban and rural habitats and ways of life; the third asks if and how an environmental perspective could shed new light on the question of the urban-rural dichotomy.

Reflecting on these and other questions will allow us to challenge existing understandings of »the boundaries of the city« and suggest new avenues of research to approach the urban-rural continuum.

The series runs in a fortnightly rhythm from November 2016 through July 2017 at ZMO. It is a joint activity of ZMO and EUME, co-organised by ZMO's research groups *Cities as Laboratories of Change* and *The Politics of Resources*.

*Nora Lafi/Katharina Lange*

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## ■ Miscellanea

### ZMO assists Scholars at Risk

ZMO is participating in a number of recent initiatives to support scholars at risk. The centre has backed threatened scholars for many years. As its researchers are often on site, face no language barriers and can assess the situation first hand, they have supported persecuted researchers in the past. Over the last twelve months the needs of scholars from Syria and Turkey have risen considerably. Colleagues in Turkey were already under attack by the state prior to the attempted coup d'état in July for signing a petition of the group Academics for Peace (see ZMO Bulletin No. 30). In September the group was awarded the Aachener Friedenspreis 2016. Meanwhile, the clampdown in Turkey has intensified with more than 2300 academics from 93 universities and around 1500 administrative staff suspended from their university posts, with travel bans, intimidation and the execution of severe sanctions. Also, all the deans in Turkey, 1577 in total, were forced to resign by the government.

The increasing urgency of scholars under attack all over the world led to a minor interpellation by German MPs about the

handling of the situation by the German government with a view to Egypt, China, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey (see <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/096/1809609.pdf>.)

ZMO therefore welcomes the founding of a German section of Scholars at Risk (SAR) that was officially launched in Bonn by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) on 20 September, 2016. SAR has its headquarters at New York University and was founded in 2000 as a matchmaking platform between threatened scholars and academic institutions. Its main work lies in advocacy and assessing the risk situation of scholars. Its network includes more than 400 higher education institutions in 39 countries. The Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Switzerland already have national sections of SAR.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation has agreed to host the secretariat of SAR Germany for the next three years. The meeting in Bonn was part of the Philipp Schwartz Initiative launched by AvH in 2015 to support scholars at risk. It receives funding from the German Foreign Office and six private German foundations.

Meeting in Bonn for the first time, it brought together scientific institutions that host refugee students as well as threatened scholars. It served as a place to discuss the needs of universities and research institutions and to plan the content of the first SAR Germany conference in Berlin on 27-28 April, 2017. This conference is intended to bundle the needs and experiences of universities, research institutions and universities of applied sciences. An urgent question of many participants concerned legal advice. It was

asked whether the secretariat could provide professional help on questions related to residence of threatened scholars and their families in Germany. It would be an important facilitation if such questions could be bundled within a FAQ manual or legal support. In constant search for support, ZMO was granted two two-year scholarships in the second round of the Philipp Schwartz Initiative for two Turkish colleagues with whom the centre had already cooperated in the past. In addition, the ZMO provided two

guest scholar stipends to assist Turkish colleagues out of its own budget.

In September Hussam Al Hassoun, a historian from the university of Aleppo, started at the ZMO. He received a CrossCulture Plus Scholarship from the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen in Stuttgart. CrossCulture Plus is geared towards young professionals from the Arab world. Further institutions that help threatened scholars are the Scholar Rescue Fund as well as the Council for At-Risk Academics. *Sonja Hegasy*

## ■ Other Activities

### Exhibitions



»Lives from a Global Conflict« at its first exhibition site, the university library of FU Berlin, September to November 2016



Heike Liebau, a historian of South Asia at the ZMO and artist Sonya Schönberger engaged in a joint research that resulted in a video installation. The video focuses on a South Asian soldier, Gangaram Gurung, and seeks to follow his experience as a prisoner of war in a German camp during the First World War. People, their life trajectories, and the narratives that

build up around them, are in the foreground of Heike Liebau's and Sonya Schönberger's respective scientific and artistic works.

ZMO colleagues from HERA and MIDA were involved in different roles in several exhibition projects.

#### ■ Lives from a Global Conflict: Cultural Entanglements during the First World War

The poster exhibition »Lives from a Global Conflict: Cultural Entanglements during the First World War« is an outcome of the three-year collaborative research project entitled *Cultural Exchange in a Time of Global Conflict: Colonials, Neutrals, and Belligerents during the First World War*, funded by HERA.

The posters show the life trajectories of 16 individuals from Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania. The men and women were soldiers, nurses and prisoners of war, but also diplomats, poets and artists. The global war brought them into other regions of the world and confronted them with experiences that changed their world views. They experienced violence, suffering and hatred but also learned new languages and encountered people whom they would never have met in another context.

The exhibition was simultaneously displayed in Utrecht, Poznan and London. It will be shown in Berlin at the ZMO until 6 January 2017 and from 11 January to 19 March at the Humboldt University Berlin.

#### ■ Digging Deep, Crossing Far: 3rd Encounter-Berlin

This exhibition at the Kunstraum Kreuzberg in Berlin was curated by Julia Tieke and Elke Falat and saw cooperation between the fields of art and social sciences.

Last September, Anandita Bajpai participated in a panel entitled »Absences in Translation«. Her talk focused on the translations and transcriptions of the recordings of the Indian prisoner of war in Germany, Chote Singh. As a »second generation« translator of the recording which is preserved at the Lautarchiv of Humboldt University Berlin, she reflected on how the original transcriptions of the recordings often do not include the spontaneous sentences uttered by the soldiers, which can serve as crucial sources for gaining insights into their lives. The same recording was utilised by the Karachi based artist group, »The Tentative Collective«, to develop an imaginative narrative around the figure of Chote Singh. Gilles Aubrey shared his ethnographic experiences in India and Pakistan and the process of designing the mixed media installation that was shown at the exhibition. The panel was chaired by Marcus Gammel (Deutschlandradio Kultur).

#### ■ Hamburg – India: An Entangled History

This exhibition, shown at the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce in September, was a product of the DFG funded long term project *Modern India in German Archives, 1706-1989* with Heike Liebau and Anandita Bajpai as the involved ZMO colleagues.

People, commodities, scientific objects and ideas have been traveling back and forth between the port city of Hamburg and India with increasing frequency for many centuries. But little is known about the nature of these exchanges or the imaginations, aspirations and interests of the historical actors shaping them. On the occasion of the German Historikertag 2016, the exhibition presented traces of the varied – but little known – entanglements between the Hanseatic City and the Indian Subcontinent. Based on findings from the Hamburg archives and scientific collections, it provided a fruitful insight into economic, intellectual, political and emigrational connections, indicating promising fields of future research.

*Heike Liebau/Anandita Bajpai*

## Open Day 2016 at the Mittelhof: Migration & Diversity, 11 September 2016, ZMO/HiKo



*A concert, a film, guided tours, lectures, an exhibition, interested interlocutors, and culinary pleasures shaped the Open Day of ZMO and HiKo*

Continuing the tradition ZMO opened its place of work, the more than a hundred years old »Mittelhof«, built by the famous German architect Hermann Muthesius, during the European Heritage Days. Organised in cooperation with the Historische Kommission zu Berlin (HiKo), the Open Day's programme comprised lectures, an exhibition, and a film screening under the heading of »Migration & Diversity«. The focus on several events, personalities, and regions addressed the topic of migration in the light of the debates on the so-called »refugee crisis«, as well as directing attention to the fact that migration movements are neither unprecedented nor isolated from the European continent.

The day began with a warm welcome by ZMO Director Ulrike Freitag and Ellen Franke, managing director of HiKo. Petra Nachtmanova, an exceptionally gifted Saz player and singer together with the musicians Deniz Mahir Kartal and Engin Işık,

opened the programme with a splendid concert of Anatolian folk music. The artists drew on the musical repertoire of different border regions, where »the most interesting intermingling of different musical styles and traditions happened,« as Petra Nachtmanova put it.

Visitors took part in several tours through the building and garden, guided by HiKo member Heinrich Kaak, ZMO senior fellow Heike Liebau and Ellen Franke. ZMO librarian Thomas Ripper curated an exhibition on funerary culture in Islam and its implications for the German context in the light of a growing Muslim community. From the perspective of the founding anniversaries of the Turkish cemetery in Berlin (150 years) and the Iranian cemetery in Hamburg (75 years) in 2016, the exhibition connected history and present.

In line with the title of the programme HiKo member Matthias Hardt focused in a lecture on migration movements of Saxons

and Franks in medieval East Central Europe, while his colleague Michael Bienert shed light on less known details of Ernst Reuter's exile in Turkey, escaping Nazi Germany in 1935. ZMO fellow Feras Krimsti presented his research on letters about flight, nostalgia and return in 19th century Aleppo.

Furthermore ZMO fellow Ali Nobil Ahmad showed his documentary short film »Waseb«. The film documents the response of a Pakistani community heavily affected by the 2010 catastrophic monsoon floods. Mostly unaware of the still on-going effects of this natural disaster in different parts of Pakistan, the audience engaged in a vivid discussion with the director about different aspects like the role of the Pakistani state in regard to compensation payments. Blessed with bright sun, the Open Day 2016 at the Mittelhof ended with a relaxed get-together.

*Yasser Mehanna*

## Gesellschaft zur Förderung des ZMO e.V. (Association for the Advancement of the ZMO e.V.)

The annual meeting of the Association was held on 9 September 2016 at ZMO. During the meeting, a new managing board was elected that now includes Peter Heine, Ulrike Freitag, Katrin Bromber, Udo Steinbach and Bettina Gräf. The participants expressed their thanks to the former board members Heike Liebau and Margret Liepach, who did not stand again. On 11 September during the ZMO Open Day, the Fritz Steppat Prize of the Association was awarded for the second time. This award marks a distinction for an outstanding scientific text by a young researcher. Fritz Steppat (1923-2006) was one of the trailblazers of present-oriented, interdisciplinary and practice-oriented research on the Orient in the Federal Republic of Germany. From 1992 to 1993, he was the first provisional director of the precursor institution to today's ZMO. In 1998, ZMO received Fritz Steppat's private research li-

brary in the frame of the Fritz and Gertraud Steppat Donation.

The Fritz Steppat Prize 2016 was awarded to Feras Krimsti for his book »Die Unruhen von 1850 in Aleppo. Gewalt im urbanen Raum«, published 2014 within the publication series ZMO-Studien. The book is based on his master thesis and discusses the 1850 uprisings in Ottoman Aleppo when Muslim inhabitants attacked Christian parts of the town. Feras Krimsti used sources which had not gained much attention so far such as church archives of Aleppo. His work offers new insights to the complexity of historical developments and represents a valuable contribution to a history of Aleppo from below. Feras Krimsti holds a Bachelor in History from the University of Aleppo (2004), a Master in Arabic and Islamic Studies as well as a Modern History degree from the FU Ber-



*Awardee Feras Krimsti and Peter Heine, chairperson of the association*

lin (2010). He obtained a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the FU Berlin in 2016.

*Heike Liebau*

ZMO mourns the death of Prof. Dr. Sadiq al-Azm (\*Damascus 1934, †Berlin 2016). Prof. al-Azm was one of the best-known Arab philosophers and secular public intellectuals. With his death, the Arab world loses an important courageous voice of enlightenment. For many researchers working on Syria, Sadiq al-Azm was a very approachable and reliable friend. We will sorely miss him.

## news

In July 2016 ZMO welcomed **Benjamin Heidrich** as stand-in assistant to the director. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master's Degree in Oriental Studies from Leipzig University. He is also writing a Ph.D. thesis on the discursive construction of state borders and collective identity in current Syria.

The joint research project *Spaces of Participation* welcomes post-doc researcher Dr. des. **Suaad Al Ghafal** as of December 2016. She completed a Master degree in Contemporary History at Tripoli University in Libya, and finished her Ph.D. at FU Berlin. In her current project she examines the uses of public spaces for peace and contentions and focuses on the role of Maydān al-shuhadā' (Martyrs' Square) in shaping political and social spheres of Tripoli, Libya.

At the end of 2016 several members of the ZMO Advisory Board bade farewell. Warmest thanks for constant support and critical reflection of ZMO ideas and work goes to Prof. **Martin van Bruinessen**, Dr. **Armory Burchard**, Prof. **William Gervase Clarence-Smith** and Prof. **Chris Hann**.

ZMO fellow at BGSMCS Dr. des. **Feras Krimsti** finished his Ph.D. in the summer and is now heading for new shores as lecturer at the University of Oxford as of November 2016. He is succeeded at BGSMCS by Dr. **Samuli Schielke**, continuing his ZMO research on literary writing in Alexandria after 2011.

ZMO appreciates hosting several visiting research fellows in various scholarship programmes. Dr. **Steven Serels**, former AvH fellow at the ZMO, and Prof. **Simeon Evstatiev** are each associated with a one-year scholarship by the Gerda Henkel foundation. Serels is working on »A Monetary History of Poverty and Insecurity in the Southern Red Sea World«. Simeon Evstatiev is an Associate Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic History at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. Within the fel-

lowship he is currently working on Salafism. His scholarly publications deal with various aspects of pre-modern and modern Islamic history, such as Islamic revivalism, Arab-Islamic historical thought, Islam and the public sphere, religious authority in Islam, as well as with political, social and intellectual tensions arising from questions of religious identity.

ZMO is also hosting two Ph.D. students for ten month as of October 2016 with a scholarship from the German Service for Academic Exchange (DAAD). **Hristo Hristozov** (University of Sofia) is working on »State, Man and Nature in the Early Modern Mountains: The Ottoman Rhodope Mountains during the 16th and the 18th centuries«. The study focuses on the biophysical alterations in the highland landscape caused by a rapid growth of the local population and the turn back effect of the changes on the mountainous society in the Ottoman Balkans. **Sheragim Jenabzadeh** is a DAAD scholarship holder from the University of Toronto. His dissertation focuses on »Iranian students in Germany and German academic institutions from the Kaiserreich to the National Socialist period«.

Dr. **Hilal Alkan Zeybek** from Istanbul Bilgi University is a EUME fellow from October 2016 to July 2017. Her project at ZMO is entitled »The Dyad of Care and Discipline: Aiding Syrian Migrants in Turkey« and focuses on the forms of contact between city dwelling Syrians in Turkey and Germany, and people who joined together in local initiatives to aid them in resettlement.

Prof. **Ahmed Abushouk** from Qatar University visited ZMO between July and August 2016 as part of the Alexander von Humboldt fellowship programme. Dr. **Nazan Maksudy-an** from Istanbul Kemerburgaz University is associated as AvH fellow from October to December of 2016 with a research project on »Farewell to Childhood? Ottoman Children and Youth in the First World War«.

**Hussam Al Hassoun**, a historian from Aleppo, is associated at ZMO since September 2016 as part of a three-month ifa CrossCulture stipend (see Profiles). Dr. **Aslı Vatansver** a guest scholar from Istanbul has been working on her project »Anti-intellectualism and neoliberal populism in Turkey« from October 2016 to January 2017. Within the framework of the ZMO Visiting Research Fellowship Programme the following guests scholars visited the Centre since July 2016: Dr. **Pedram Partovi** (American University, Washington), Dr. **Peter Lambertz** (Philosophat Edith Stein, Kisangani, DR Congo), Dr. **Thomas Kühn** (Simon Fraser University, Canada) and Dr. **Farzana Haniffa** (see Profiles).

ZMO also welcomed several short-time guests

during the latter half of 2016: Dr. **Eszter Spät** (Käte Hamburger Kolleg, Duisburg), Dr. **Omar Khalifa** (Georgetown University, Qatar), Dr. **Johara Berriane** (Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris) and **Senni Jyrkiäinen** (Helsinki University, Finland). ZMO congratulates former colleague Dr. des. **Leyla von Mende**, finishing her Ph.D. with a Summa cum laude in December 2016.

## calendar

### LECTURE SERIES:

#### AT THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD?

**A SPATIAL APPROACH TO THE HAJJ PILGRIMAGE**, ZMO / IAAW / BGSMCS, 6 pm, October 2016 to June 2017

- Saud Serhan, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies / Werner Ende, Emeritus, University Freiburg, 26 January 2017, ZMO
- Chanfi Ahmed, HU Berlin / Irit Back, Tel Aviv University, 23 February 2017, IAAW
- Lale Can, City University of New York / John Slight, University of Cambridge, 30 March 2017, ZMO
- Manja Stephan-Emmrich, HU Berlin / Marjo Buitelaar, University of Groningen, 27 April 2017

### Programme

**URBAN STUDIES SEMINAR: RETHINKING URBAN-RURAL RELATIONS IN AN AGE OF MIGRATION, DISPLACEMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND FRINGE URBANIZATION**, ZMO, 5 pm, November 2016 to July 2017

- Patrick Schukalla, ZMO, 16 January 2017
- Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, Boğaziçi University Istanbul, 6 February 2017
- Hilal Alkan, Istanbul, EUME/ZMO 2015-16, 24 April 2017

### Programme

### EXHIBITON:

**Lives from a Global Conflict. Cultural ENTANGLEMENTS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR**, ZMO, 10 November 2016 - 6 January 2017, Mo - Fr 9 am - 3 pm

For further information see:  
[www.zmo.de/veranstaltungen/](http://www.zmo.de/veranstaltungen/)

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