



Invitation

Thursday, July 7th, 2011, 6 pm

Near Eastern Migration to the Philippines, 1860s-1940s

Lecture by Prof. William G. Clarence-Smith

Venue

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
Conference Hall

14129 Berlin

Julfa Armenians had been present in the Philippines since the 17th century, but the first known 'Ottoman' Armenian arrived in 1869. The 'Syrian' community grew from the 1880s, reaching around 2,000, mainly Greek Orthodox, Latin Catholics, and Maronites, and also Chaldaeans, Druzes, Sunni Muslims, and Jews. They came from all over the Ottoman world, but mainly from Lebanon and Palestine. They began as peddlers, as the ardent Catholicism of many Filipinos provided a niche selling religious objects. They later came to own stores, and then import-export companies. They were prominent in the professions, real estate, transport, utilities, and entertainment, present in agriculture and mining, and pioneers in the proto-industrial manufacture of embroidery for export. They gradually moved into manufacturing proper.

The Spaniards, suspicious of Arabic-speakers, prohibited 'Ottomans' from going to largely Muslim Mindanao in 1890. Some 'Syrians' worked for the US colonial administration after 1898, and Najib Salibi acted as an intermediary between Americans and Muslim Moros. 'Syrian' men often married local Christian women, and many families became hispanicized, so that social assimilation slowly eroded community coherence. Near Easterners suffered terribly during the Japanese occupation of 1941-45, and they feared the consequences of Filipino independence in 1946. Many returned home, or joined relatives in the Americas and Australia. Nevertheless, the community survived, and welcomed some of those displaced from Palestine from 1948, and from Lebanon between 1975 and 1990.

William Gervase Clarence-Smith is Professor of the Economic History of Asia and Africa, at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, where he teaches the history of Islamic reform in Southeast Asia, and research methods in history. He is also chief editor of the *Journal of Global History* (LSE & CUP). He published *Islam and the abolition of slavery* (Hurst & OUP: 2006), and co-edited (with Ulrike Freitag) *Hadhrami traders, scholars and statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s to 1960s* (Brill: 1997). He has published many articles and chapters on diasporas, including one on Middle Easterners in the Philippines in *Asian Journal of Social Science* in 2004. He has also published on colonialism, slavery, sexuality, transport, textiles, agriculture and livestock in different parts of the tropics.

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