



Einladung/Aushang

Tuesday, 26 June 2007, 6 pm

Veranstaltungsort

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Konferenzsaal
Kirchweg 33
14129 Berlin-Nikolassee

Rewriting the Indian Revolt of 1857: Jihadi Muslims and the Nation

Lecture by Prof. Seema Alavi (Delhi)
Response: Prof. Jürgen Kocka (Berlin)

The Indian Revolt of 1857 – called “Mutiny” by imperial historians and claimed as “First Indian War of Independence” by the Indian National Movement – brought together a large array of forces opposing colonial rule. Histories of the last 50 years fitted the 1857 narrative into the mega-narrative of the Indian ‘secular’ nation state. On the one hand, this led to the inclusion of stories of mass scale agrarian and urban unrest as well as Hindu-Muslim unity. On the other hand, people and histories which did not quite fit into this straight jacket of the nation state, most notably Muslims and more specially those Muslims who were scholars of Islam and whose political activism in the years leading to 1857 borrowed from their religious imaginary, found no place in this narrative.

The talk by Prof. Dr. Seema Alavi will offer some corrective to this historiographical imbalance on 1857. It highlights histories of politically active Muslim scholars, who either lived through or anticipated the turbulence of 1857 as well as a third group, who many decades later chose to include 1857 as part of their recorded histories. She thereby raises the question of the significance of religion in mapping the nation state.

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kocka will respond to this question from the view-point of a scholar of modern European history. This links up with ZMO’s programmatic aim of working towards the integration of modern Oriental and European history into a common frame of reference.

Prof. Dr. Seema Alavi teaches history at the Jamia Millia Islamia at Delhi. She studied in Delhi and Cambridge, from where she holds a PhD. She was a visiting scholar at Harvard and Cambridge.

Prof. Dr. h.c. Jürgen Kocka has taught history at Bielefeld and Berlin. He has been director of the Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung (Bielefeld), the Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung (Postdam) and the Wissenschaftszentrum (Berlin) where he presently holds a research professorship.