

Forschungszentrum Gotha der Universität Erfurt



PROGRAMM 2017/18

Abendvortrag im Rahmen der Tagung „Transimperial
Cooperation and Transfers in the Age of Colonial Globalization“

Donnerstag, 22. März 2018, 17:15 Uhr | Forschungszentrum Gotha
(Seminarraum im Pagenhaus, Schloss Friedenstern)

Prof. Dr. Corey Ross (Birmingham)

**The Nature of Trans-imperialism:
Ecological Interconnections and Colonized Environments**

For all their constant rivalry, Europe's overseas empires were fundamentally interactive entities whose commonalities continually opened up spaces for cross-border coordination. Over the past several years, historians have drawn on the insights of the 'trans-national turn' in historiography to explore various aspects of trans-imperial interconnection, focusing above all on the transfer of knowledge, practices and expertise across imperial borders. More recently still, scholars have started to look beyond the connections between colonial officials and policy-makers to consider also how such reciprocal linkages affected the colonized as well as the colonizers. This lecture will consider how these processes look when we expand the category of the 'colonized' beyond the realm of human societies to include also the ecosystems in which they were themselves embedded: the soil, water, plants, and animals that were likewise a part of Europe's empire. It will argue that attempts to manage biophysical environments and to extract or conserve natural resources formed a key arena of trans-imperial connectivity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After all, biophysical processes and ecological interrelationships showed little respect for political or linguistic boundaries, and nor did many of the human-driven forces (trade, commodity production, colonial 'development') that so powerfully re-shaped colonized landscapes. The lecture will propose various typologies of what we might call 'ecological trans-imperialism' on the basis of examples drawn from across the tropical world.

Corey Ross is Professor of Modern History at the University of Birmingham, UK. His main research interests are in the fields of environmental history, imperialism and global history, though he has also written widely on the history of mass communications and the history of state socialism. His most recent book, *Ecology and Power in the Age of Empire*, appeared in 2017.



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