

The final conference of the research project *Between Economy and Morality – The Anti-Slavery Movements as a Transnational Network in the “Long 19th Century,”* funded by the Gerda-Henkel Foundation, provides a platform for a discussion of various aspects that were relevant to the differently motivated anti-slavery movements.

## **Between Economy and Morality – The Anti-Slavery Movements as a Transnational Network in the “Long 19th Century”**

Starting in the United Kingdom, the abolition of slavery quickly became one of the most pressing social issues of the 19th century. Contrary to the commonly held perception that the anti-slavery movements were a teleological success story, slavery underwent a number of phases of abolition and reintroduction, while the informal exploitative structures of ‘slavery’ never completely disappeared. This was exacerbated by the fact that the various systems of slavery spanned several eras, continents, and ideological histories. In line with recent research on the history of human rights, the conference takes up a critical, cultural-historical history of capitalism with the aim of first analysing it and then linking it to the phenomenon of morally motivated movements in the 19th century.

The final conference of the research project *Between Economy and Morality – The Anti-Slavery Movements as a Transnational Network in the “Long 19th Century,”* funded by the Gerda-Henkel Foundation, provides a platform for a discussion of various aspects that were relevant to the differently motivated anti-slavery movements. Among other things, this will consider the more recent research in historiography, which proves that, for example, the German states and the German Empire in the 19th century were not as uninvolved in profits from the slave trade as had been long assumed. In addition to this purely ‘German’ perspective, however,

similar structures, discourses, and practices can and will be dealt with from an international or transnational perspective.

Among the possible questions that will be discussed at the conference are the following: From which specific practices did conceptions of slavery and anti-slavery arise and to what extent did ruptures or also unifying moments emerge along the boundaries of the differentiation categories of race, class, and gender? To what extent did (transnational) transfers of ideas between abolitionism and other fields of discourse acquire relevance for contemporary ideas of law and justice? What practical implications as well as changes for the mnemonic can and should be drawn from attitudes towards slavery and abolitionism in the long 19th century for our understanding of colonialism and European responsibility today? To what extent should historical 'master narratives' be critically questioned in the sense of a history of human rights seen in terms of a history of progress? How did the ideas that originated with the anti-slavery movements emanate out to other emancipative movements, such as women's suffrage in the 19th century? What memories of slavery were established from the mid-19th century to the present?

The following panels are planned:

- The ambivalent role of religion
- Actors in the slave trade
- Imperialism and anti-slavery
- Transnational entanglements of the anti-slavery movements & Black agency
- German/European emigrants in the US anti-slavery movement
- Perspectives for the memory culture
- (Anti-)Socialism, social movements, and slavery
- Anti-slavery movements in the context of a general history of human rights/legislation
- Post-emancipation and forms of bondage after the formal abolition of

slavery

- Racism and (pseudo)science as legitimising patterns of thought

The conference will take place from 29 November 2023 to 1 December 2023 in Bochum and is organised by the Institute for Social Movements of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum and the Chair for the History of European Modernity of the FernUniversität in Hagen. Travel and accommodation costs (2 nights in Bochum) will be covered.

The organisers kindly ask you to send a short abstract and a CV to [lisa.weber@fernuni-hagen.de](mailto:lisa.weber@fernuni-hagen.de) and [ole.merkel@ruhr-uni-bochum.de](mailto:ole.merkel@ruhr-uni-bochum.de) by 28 February 2023.

**Contact (announcement)**

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