

Working Group C:
Concepts of Nature and Future: Africa and Beyond
Session at 22nd May 2014
Liberation movements revisited

Inspirational text for the session: "The Ultimate Safari" by Nadine Gordimer in: Robin Malan ed.: Being here.

Presentation by Annalisa Urbano: **The idea of Greater Somalia and its dissident/multiple voices: the Somali Youth Office in Cairo 1957-9**

Central points of her presentation are 1) The Meaning of independence in Africa, 2) Liberation movements, 3) Connected aspects like nation, race, gender. Many movements after 2nd World War had often an antiimperialist and antiracist world view; the idea of Somalia as a nation state emerged in the 1940s after Italian occupants were defeated by the British. The new uncertainty made many futures possible. The suspended status brought many views to life, especially by youth movements. Building an united nation state had many implications: promoting unity not just in resistance to occupation but even against other forms of oppression and against ethnic segregation. The fight for and preparation of independence allowed a large variety in Somalia and in the diaspora (like in other countries and among other diasporas). Different political visions of future were relevant during this time. Leadership in Mogadishu remained in neocolonial relations with old masters; these leaders were abandoning the idea of a greater Somalia. Somali Youth Office acknowledged leadership of Mogadishu but even called them responsible for the whole area and asked for the UN to intervene against British and French activities in Ethiopia.

Presentation by Achim von Oppen: **Zambia before independence and the rural urban relationship?**

During the colonial period there exist various anticolonial movements. For example Zambia became independent in 1964 but already in the 1950s there were liberation movements active there as in diaspora. It has to be asked for whom liberation was relevant and which liberation was reached: national liberation, liberation of civil rights or even social liberation and human rights? There was a feeling of deprivation too, especially in rural/peripher areas with liberations movements very different from urban movements. The national victory in Zambia was mainly achieved by mine workers and trade unions located in cities. At the same time rebels operated from "the bush"/peripher areas because cities were controlled by colonial power. This relationship contained more than tactical aspects. Many people looked at "the bush" as dangerous and expensive where you could be attacked (like from beasts before). So there was the differentiation: People by the road – people from the bush. And this differentiation of urban and rural as village and bush holds on. Bush is still imagined as "wild", as something different than "civilized" countryside.

Presentation by Katharina Fink and Nadine Siegert: **Liber(n)ation(s) & others**

The presentations starts with an entry image by Alex Opper (2013): "Separ(n)ation"; fence woven into city as icon of nation building. This picture raises the question of city and liberation. Nkrumah (1961) looked for an African solution for global problems and found it in an African united state. This was even carried out in artistic presentations like wool tapestries (e.g. Athi Patra-Ruga: "The Lands of Azania 2014-2094"). Nadine and Katharina presented and contextualized various iconographic images of rural-urban relation and of feminity in liberation movements in Angola and Moçambique. Liberation movements were an answer to colonial oppression, liberation form gender, class, heteronormative oppression is stil going on. Hypothesis on nature and future: cultivation is even linked to creation of new man; can be connected to urban-rural/semi-rural area; bush as space of emancipation before and after revolution.

Discussion

How are liberation goals are linked to society/nature-relations? In all presentations liberation was linked to state and to borders. Same is with order and borders in the village. It was not clear whether the idea of liberation could be connected to the countryside. "Bush" is a metaphor used in several contexts to denote different spaces and meanings. Is it related only to a national or even social (gender, capitalism, class etc.) liberation? The control of natural resource and the land where these resources are located was the main task of colonial activities and of all governments after liberation. In many cases appropriation and exploitation of nature was much more extensive after liberation. National borders are mostly relevant to declare land ownership and rights of appropriation. Even another reality, and society/nature-relation would be possible if another future would have happened.