



CENTRE FOR ASIAN AND
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SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE



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HEIDELBERG
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Department of Modern South Asian History

Colloquium

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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86795299661>

Please register at history@sai.uni-heidelberg.de

German Soldiers in Africa and Asia, c. 1750-1800

by

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Since European trading companies sailed for India and China, men from Germany voluntarily enlisted as sailors or as soldiers to escape poverty and misery in their country. Especially after the Seven Years War (1756-63) and the demobilisation of tens of thousands of soldiers, migrating men in search for employment and labour was endemic in large parts of Germany. Temporary migration as sailors or soldiers either serving the English East India Company or the Dutch Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie was among the options destitute and desperate men had to escape pauperisation. Of particular interest will be the so-called "Kapregiment", sent in 1787 to Capetown, Colombo and finally Java to serve the VOC's and the Netherland's colonial interests, and the two Hanoverian Regiments sent to Madras in 1782 to serve the same interests of the English rivals. Special attention will be given, on the one hand, to the reasons for voluntarily enlisting as soldiers and, on the other hand, on the work-circle at their places of destination. Soldiering for a living, even abroad, was a strategy of sheer survival in times of scarcity, unemployment and agricultural crisis.