

Central Africa Expedition Poster (1909)

Abstract

The acquisition of colonies in Africa stimulated the popular imagination in Germany. Once-foreign lands and peoples were now under German control, to be “discovered,” analyzed, and catalogued. In the nineteenth century Germans were leaders in the new field of anthropology. Anthropological exhibitions allowed the larger public to encounter African peoples and cultures. This poster suggests the exoticizing and simultaneously demeaning character of one such exhibition, which was put on in 1909. Duke Adolf Friedrich of Mecklenburg, who is named as the organizer, had led an expedition that crossed the African continent from east to west in 1907-1908. The expedition was intended for topographical, botanical, medical, and ethnographic research and was documented photographically. In addition to various objects that were presumably on display in this exhibition, he also brought more than 1,000 skulls to Germany that had been stolen from graves.

The text reads: “Central Africa Expedition taken in 1907/1908 by Duke Adolf Friedrich of Mecklenburg. Exhibition of Scientific Findings. Exhibition Halls at the Zoo. Berlin, March 3-20, 1909. Open from 10am-7pm.”

Source



Source: Poster, 1909. Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin

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