

Facing the future: Dealing with an uncertain past in order to work in an uncertain future.

Principal Investigator: Professor David Zeitlyn (University of Oxford)

Website: <http://www.mambila.info/Futures>

SUMMARY

"The future is certain. Only the past is unpredictable." USSR graffiti 1980s. Conventionally the past is fixed and the future changeable. But these commonsense attitudes are subject to interesting questions which the Soviet graffiti summarises. Contentiously in therapy the past is changed (our understanding is changed) and this can change present and future affliction. How can archives and museums allow for such future reconfigurations of the past?

The project workshops will explore the background and potential understanding of controversial episodes in colonial and post-colonial history, starting with the Bamileke uprising in Cameroon but then considering the relevance of this case for others in UK and Europe. The topics to be discussed have relevance to and hence potential impacts on a variety of different professions outside academe: archivists and museum curators working on collections which are/were controversial and are subject to highly variable readings/interpretations which are themselves controversial.