



Cultural History of Diplomacy, 1815-1914. London: German Historical Institute London, 23.09.2005-24.09.2005.

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Published on H-Soz-u-Kult (November, 2005)

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After intense theoretical debate over the past decade about cultural history as a new approach in historical research, historians have started to practice as they preach, and have embarked on a number of projects dealing with politics in a new way. Studies of foreign policy and the diplomatic service, in particular, no longer examine exclusively economic, power-political and geo-political motivation in diplomatic negotiations, but link form and content. To borrow Charles Webster's terminology, it is absolutely necessary to examine "how policy was made in order to understand why it was so made". Some of the historians who have successfully linked the "how" and the "why" in the history of diplomacy were invited to speak at an international conference held at the German Historical Institute London on 23 and 24 September 2005.

Nineteen speakers presented their latest findings under the title of "Cultural History of Diplomacy, 1815-1914". As Markus Mößlang (London) emphasized in his introduction, such an approach allows us to deal with diplomacy as both a real world experience and a structural element in international relations. Despite the large variety of possible topics, Mößlang identified central themes emerging from the cultural approach. Based on his research on British envoys to Germany, he showed how perceptions, public life, publicity, traditions, symbols, and symbolic actions provided an umbrella of multiple interests and analytical categories that help to broaden and diversify the understanding of diplomacy.

In her introductory remarks "Are Diplomats Necessary?" Zara Steiner (Cambridge) underlined the central

role of the state and its impact on the diplomatic service. The majority of changes in the diplomatic world were influenced by, or at least coincided with, domestic changes. Diplomacy, however, was never just limited to a national history, but was always an object of larger transformations. Thus the First World War still represents the major turning point in the history of European diplomacy. In a world accelerated by transformation and change, diplomats seemed to have lost much of the control they formerly exercised, as epitomized in the catastrophe of 1914-18. However, as Steiner pointed out, older traditions lived on after the end of the First World War, and despite their interconnectedness, the two spheres of 'diplomatic' and 'domestic' did not necessarily follow the same pattern in their attempts to adapt to change.

The first session, "Status and Self-Perception: The Aristocracy and the Diplomatic Services during the Nineteenth Century", chaired by Karina Urbach (London), was opened by Thomas Otte (Norwich) with an overview of "The Role of the Aristocracy in the Diplomatic Services of the Great Powers, c. 1850-1914". Dealing with contemporary and historical assumptions about diplomacy as the exclusive preserve of the aristocracy, Otte described the "social dimension" of Great Power politics as an important aspect shaping diplomatic patterns. At the same time he showed how attempts to open up the diplomatic service to the rising middle classes did not fail completely, but came too late to adapt to the challenges before the outbreak of the First World War.

Dietmar Grypa (Eichstätt) focused exclusively on

the Prussian diplomatic service. In his presentation, “‘Phoney Nobles’ in the Prussian Diplomatic Service, 1815-1866”, he questioned whether an aristocratic background really played a major role in the selection of future diplomats. Based on a detailed study of Prussia’s diplomatic representatives, his paper showed that the introduction of an entrance examination in 1827 meant that qualification more than rank brought future diplomatists into the service. However, aristocratic status was still an important aspect. Grypa illustrated this by reference to the number of Prussians from the lower aristocracy and the middle classes who assumed the title of “Freiherr” (baron) without any justification, mainly to increase their social position amongst their European colleagues.

The perception of diplomacy as an aristocratic prerogative was an integral part of the debates on the reform of diplomacy. In the second session of the conference, entitled “The Dawn of New Diplomacy: Reforms and Changes before 1914” (Chair: Michael Hughes, Liverpool), this debate was examined in the context of the Austrian and French diplomatic services. William D. Godsey Jr. (Vienna) discussed “The Culture of Diplomacy and Reform in the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office”. In his paper, Godsey featured Adolf von Plason and Alois Aehrenthal as the most influential reformers. While Plason focused on more practical aspects like admission standards and bureaucratic experience, Aehrenthal’s attempts went much further, and often incorporated commercial considerations which had been a major concern of the domestic business community in Austria and Hungary. However Aehrenthal’s reform did not aim for a wholesale reorganization nor did it overcome the social bias of diplomatic recruitment.

Jean-Marc Delaunay (Paris) questioned whether the diplomatic service in France underwent an important transformation during the time of the Third Republic. In his paper, “The French Diplomatic Service, 1870-1914: Great Changes?”, he placed the diplomatic service in the context of new staff and methods, new fields and changing activities, and changing ways of life. The insecurity of the political system, particularly in the decade preceding 1879, meant that the regime chose not to follow its own, republican, path of diplomatic negotiations, but rather adapted to the traditional traits of diplomacy. It was, in Delaunay’s terms, the “obsessive fear of decline” that shaped the French diplomatic service up to 1914.

In the third session “Extension and Expansion of Diplomatic Services” (Chair: Christopher Baxter, London), the cases of Bavaria and Switzerland illustrated

how minor states came to terms with the international environment after 1815. In his paper “Crossing the Atlantic: Bavarian Diplomacy and the Formation of Consular Services Overseas, 1820-1871”, Martin Ott (Munich) focused on consuls in North America. Ott identified mutual trade relations as the key motivation behind the establishment of consular missions in coastal and inland regions of the USA. From the point of view of the homeland, consulates were not intended to include representative duties, a fact that was often ignored by the consuls themselves. The increasing number of Bavarian immigrants in the USA led the consuls to adopt a semi-political role.

Claude Altermatt (Berne) entitled his paper “From Hostility to Conformity: Switzerland and its Diplomatic System”. Unlike the Bavarian case, the Swiss diplomatic service emerged from an institution interested mainly in trade and economic aspects. Public dislike and strong federal traditions slowed down this process, but from the turn of the century Switzerland succeeded in establishing a diplomatic network, although it was modest in size, numbering only eleven legations.

In the Swiss case, the system of public referendums had placed many obstacles in the way of setting up a diplomatic service. The increasing importance of public attitudes towards politics was more specifically addressed in the fourth session, “Facing the Public - Diplomacy and the Press” (Chair: Matthew Seligmann, Northampton). Rudolf Muhs (London) discussed this aspect in his paper on “Diplomacy and Publicity: The Emergence of the Press Attaché in Prussia and Elsewhere”. In the light of Bismarck’s early attempts to revive the Frankfurt Federal Diet by establishing Karl Zitelmann as attaché there, Muhs discussed the role of this new position which was intended to combat a hostile foreign press. The press attaché can thus be seen as the predecessor of a modern PR expert who increasingly adapted to professional standards and became a regular feature of diplomatic missions abroad.

William Mulligan’s (Glasgow) paper, “Mobs and Diplomats: British Diplomats and Public Opinion, c. 1870”, concentrated on British reactions to American public opinion in the aftermath of the Civil War. Mulligan observed that the British diplomats constantly noted the state of American public opinion, which he saw as “the major obstacle to the settlement of differences between the two countries”. Diplomats not only responded to an aggressive foreign press but at the same time had to moderate the impact of the British domestic press when

it turned against their country of residence. As Mulligan concluded, “many debates and issues flowed over borders, rather than being restricted to national borders”.

While the first three sections dealt with the structures and environment of the diplomatic service, the subsequent papers focused on the representational and symbolic aspects of diplomacy. In the fourth section, “Protocol and Etiquette as Part of Diplomatic Representation” (Chair: Johannes Paulmann, Bremen), Antony Best (London) in his paper “‘Almost a Civilized Country’: The Role of Court Diplomacy and Protocol in Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1867-1914” examined the attitude of the British government and head of state towards their Japanese counterparts through the practice of granting, or rather not granting, decorations to Japanese diplomatic representatives at the British court. In contradistinction to David Cannadine’s hypothesis of equality between monarchies across the racial divide, Best saw Japan’s use of court diplomacy as unsuccessful. He illustrated this by reference to the treatment of the Japanese representative at Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee.

Sussane Schattenberg (Berlin) further elaborated on the importance of protocol issues in her interpretation of the Russo-Japanese peace negotiations in Portsmouth in 1905. In her paper “The Diplomat as ‘an actor on a great stage before the whole people’: Diplomatic Strategies at the Peace Negotiations of Portsmouth in 1905”, Schattenberg presented the Japanese as the master of protocol at these negotiations, embarrassing their counterparts with regard to the accreditation of plenipotentiaries. However, as she pointed out, the Russian diplomats proved more successful in achieving their diplomatic aims by winning popular support through the American press. Schattenberg’s main argument was that such cultural interpretations of diplomatic negotiation had to be reconciled with the traditional interpretation of American economic interests as the key factor behind the outcome of Portsmouth.

In the fifth session, entitled “Representing the Republic: a New Culture of Diplomacy?” (Chair: Torsten Riotte, London), David Paull Nickles (Washington) discussed “US Diplomatic Etiquette, 1815-1914”. Asking whether the US government intended to wage a cultural struggle against diplomatic practice, or aimed to adopt existing international practices, Nickles emphasized the distinction between revolutionary and republican. He further demonstrated that the US diplomatic service did not conform to certain diplomatic conventions (for example, it followed an anti-luxury ideology) while still con-

ferring with others. Nickles concluded that American diplomatic etiquette during these years illustrates the influence of social change.

The French response to the clash between republican values and diplomatic protocol was different. As Verena Steller (Bochum) pointed out in her paper, “The Power of Protocol: French Politics of Representation and the Symbolic Action of Diplomacy, 1871-1914”, French diplomats had to reconcile the traditional forms of diplomatic representation with “the stylistic devices of a genuine national Republican identity”. Although republican ideals became an important aspect of the domestic visualization of political power, the French diplomatic service followed long-established protocol, in most cases with success.

The following session, “Encountering the Orient: Diplomatic Relations and the Middle East” (Chair: Hagen Schulze, London), went beyond the borders of Europe, and dealt with diplomatic representation in North Africa. Richard Pennell’s (Melbourne) discussion of British consular representations in Morocco, Tunis, and Tripoli, entitled “What Effect did Not-So-Great Men have on Diplomatic Relations and Why”, linked socio-historical research with aspects of cultural history. Focusing on three individual consuls, Pennell stressed the degree of independence and political power which the large distances and slowness of communications between North Africa and their British homeland conferred upon them. At the same time the consuls were able to influence the representatives of other European countries (and the USA), forming a closely interrelated *élite* that often intermarried. Pennell concluded that such local *élites* influenced political developments on a long-term basis.

In the following presentation Sabine Mangold (Wuppertal) discussed the encounter between European diplomats and North African custom. Her paper, “Oriental Slowness? Friedrich Rosen’s Expedition to the Sultan of Morocco in 1906”, described the German diplomat’s journey from Tangier to Fez to meet the Sultan. Following Moroccan custom, Rosen was forced to go on a lengthy expedition of eleven days although it would have been possible to travel faster. As Mangold pointed out, Rosen, as an Orientalist and a diplomat, responded with a mix of irritation and sympathy to this time-consuming ceremony. In conclusion she suggested that understanding Oriental ceremonies is useful in identifying similar symbolic aspects of European diplomacy.

The final session of the conference was entitled “Expertise and Status: Diplomatic Representatives and their Interaction with a Foreign Environment” (Chair: Hamish

Scott, St Andrews). In her paper, "The Art of Diplomacy: British Diplomats and the Collection of Italian Renaissance Paintings, 1851-1917", Saho Matsumoto-Best (Nagoya) examined the close relationship between diplomacy and the acquisition of art, emphasizing that diplomats used informal networks to resolve political issues. She discussed how the battle over Henry Austin Layard's collection of paintings bequeathed to the National Gallery after his death turned into a long-standing diplomatic battle between Britain and Italy lasting for almost fifteen years. She concluded that side-issues of this kind sometimes play a significant role in diplomacy.

In his paper "Nation, Class, and Diplomacy: The Dragomanate of the British Embassy in Constantinople" G.R. Berridge (Leicester) showed that a rising degree of national excitement on the British side and the following reluctance to engage with local expertise led to the decline of a traditional institution in the diplomatic service. As Berridge illustrated, the British decision no longer to recruit Levantines in the dragomante was based mainly on suspicion of what is nowadays called "locally-engaged staff". This step could be seen not only as the failure of a diplomatic service to adapt to local circumstances, but as also as a result of the increasing impact of power politics on diplomatic practices.

Hamish Scott closed the conference with some remarks made from the angle of an early modern historian. He stressed that traditions continuing from the early modern period - the court ceremony, French as the diplomatic language, the dominance of aristocracy - had to be taken into account. For a more comprehensive picture as intended by a cultural history of diplomacy, he suggested, it is necessary not only to include a wider range of topics but equally to break down traditional periodizations.

The multi-perspective approach of the conference combined more traditional studies with new angles on the overall subject. All papers reflected the complexity of diplomacy and allowed to draw a more comprehensive picture of the diplomatic services than is usually the case. The contributions underlined that cultural categories shaped the diplomats' practice, behaviour, and influence and are crucial for an understanding of the role of diplomacy in international relations between 1815 and 1914. Moreover the wide geographical scope of the conference stressed the internationality of diplomacy as a global phenomenon.

The organizers of the conference intend to publish the proceedings.

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Citation: Markus Mößlang. Review of , *Cultural History of Diplomacy, 1815-1914*. H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. November, 2005.

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