



Second ENIUGH-Congress: Session "Global Moments and World Orders". Dresden: European Network in World and Global History (ENIUGH), 03.07.2008-05.07.2008.

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In the following you find a report on the session "Global Moments and World Orders" of the Second European Congress on World and Global History. The general aim and structure of the congress are described at:

Session: Global Moments and World Orders

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World orders – imagined or real – are rarely stable constructions. They can be questioned or changed rapidly in specific moments in world history when political or cultural ruptures cause dramatic changes in social orders or cultural perceptions and world views. The congress devoted one session to the importance of such "global moments" in history for the creation and destruction of world orders, showing in five panels the richness of themes and approaches of recent research in that field. Of course, the panels went far beyond a narrow focus on "event history", using a wide understanding of global moments to touch central issues and problems of global history. Especially Imperialism/Colonialism and Labour/Slavery can be named as the two main themes, which were discussed in all five panels in one way or another.

One of the well-known and most discussed historical global moments in (at least Western) historiography is the French Revolution. The two-part panel (The French Revolution in transnational perspective: breakthrough to a new world order) dedicated to this issue tried to overcome the traditional concentration of research on its impact in Europe or France itself and picked up the

recent discussions on cultural transfers and the global and transnational dimension of the revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Concentrating on a European perspective CHANTAL KEESTELOOT (Bruxelles) showed on the often neglected case of Belgium how deep the revolutionary principles transformed a foreign territory during 20 years of French occupation. The ambivalent French heritage and its perception by different groups were a constant and controversial point of reference in politics and national discourse of the emerging Belgian society in the 19th century. Yet the paper of the absent JEAN-CLEMENT MARTIN (Paris) presented by MATTHIAS MIDDELL (Leipzig) encompassed the whole European continent, interpreting the revolution in a broader perspective. Martin made the strong argument that the French Revolution was not the beginning of a revolutionary cycle but the end of one. In his view the revolution marked the first successful realization of reforms that had been unsuccessful in other parts of Europe in the decades before. However, in the personal memory of the contemporaries – as ALLAN FORREST (York) stated – the experience of war was much more important than the revolution and the Jacobin ideas. As the revolutionary war lasted for such a long period between 1792 and 1815, war became a fundamental life experience for a whole generation. Furthermore in the era of the French Revolution war was a basically transnational experience for the soldiers that met foreign countries and cultures as well as for the local populations facing "the other" when war and foreign soldiers came to their territory.

Perhaps the most innovative perspective on the im-

part of the French Revolution was taken by NORA LAFI (Berlin). Looking at the French occupation of Egypt between 1798 and 1801 by using Arabic sources – here: the chronicle of the local noble Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti – she questioned the traditional perspective of a Eurocentric historiography that describes this global moment as the confrontation of a modern West with a backward East and the founding moment for colonial history in the Middle East. Incorporating a linguistic approach Lafi revealed the ambiguity of French modernity and described an Ottoman society that was in no way as static, traditional or alien as the European observers thought. Many Egyptians rejected the contradictory French revolutionary rhetorics and politics, because they perceived them as very traditional, for the Napoleonic invaders presented their republic – in a moment when in France ruled some kind of conservative aristocracy on the verge of collapsing under Bonapartist caesarism – as a –college of the elders– and confirmed that by filling the local governing council (diwan) with local aristocrats and religious notables, thereby continuing the Ottoman old regime by imposing another old regime.

Putting into perspective the Gallocentric historiography from another side, MARCEL DORIGNY (Paris) illuminated the Atlantic dimension of the French revolution by interpreting the Haitian Revolution, which is often but wrongly perceived as the –little sister– of the European uprising. He pointed out that regarding the different revolutionary aims of the three factions of the island society (plantation owners, *libres de couleur*, slaves) makes clear that the revolution on Saint-Domingue had its own dynamics, although it was connected with the revolution in France. The specific nature of the colonial society caused a new type of revolution which created then a new form of statehood. Picking up this point in his summary, Matthias Middell argued that the former –anecdote– of the Haitian Revolution becomes in a transnational perspective essential for the history of the French Revolution. The first successful slave rebellion in world history caused the loss of France most important colony and reoriented French politics and economy back to the European continent. Furthermore, if one regards the French Revolution in such spatial dimensions it became clear that the revolution was not only the beginning of a nationalized 19th century, but that it produced various forms of territoriality the contemporaries had to deal with.

Atlantic History stood also in the focus of the second panel of this session (World/ Global History and Slavery), understanding the different abolitions of slave trade and

slavery as global moments whose anniversaries strengthened interest of researchers in that field over the last years. Most of the presentations tried to show the virtues of a global historical perspective by connecting dense empirical research on micro level with trends of macro history. CLAUS FÄLLBERG-STOLBERG (Hannover) described the ambivalent position of the transnational community of the Moravians (Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine) and their missionaries in the Danish Caribbean on slavery and abolition: Although they regarded the slaves as human beings they opposed to abolition movements and defended the existing social or –world– order in the colonies. Applying a comparative approach ULRIKE SCHMIEDER (Hannover) followed the traces of abolition and post-emancipation in the French and Spanish Caribbean, emphasizing the dense entanglement of local developments in Cuba and Martinique with processes of global history in the 19th century. The most fascinating example of combining the local and the global gave SILKE STRICKRODT (Berlin) with her investigation of the history of the African port of Little Popo (today Anã©ho/Togo) and its connection with the Atlantic slave trade. Taking the long period between 1680 and 1860 into perspective – but concentrating on well-documented historical phases – Strickrodt found that the main trends of the Atlantic slave trade did not neatly correspond to the rhythm of Little Popo’s history. Although the global demand for African labour was an important factor of its history, more often local factors like wars and commercial rivalries with the neighbors gave Little Popo its autonomous local history that only at points intersected with global processes.

But the –big– Atlantic plantation slavery was just one specific type of slavery, although it dominates until today the hegemonic narratives of Western world history, argued MICHAEL ZEUSKE (Köln) in his attempt to give a broad overview and interpretation of the world history of slavery. He traced slavery back until its genesis in prehistoric times and underlined, that in a global historical perspective various forms of –small– kin-slavery were much more important and widespread, even into our days, than the –classic– form of –big– slavery in Roman tradition. A sensibility of historians for the different types of unfree labour could open the view for the ubiquity of slavery in world history – even when it is not called slavery – and could put into perspective Eurocentric narratives that draw a tradition line from the Roman slave society to the Atlantic slavery until the Abolition movement and neglect Islamic, African or Asian history.

To overcome Eurocentric or national isolation of

historical research and to establish comparative and transnational approaches was the aim of SEBASTIAN CONRAD's (Florence) panel on colonialism (Ordering the Colonial World - Comparative and Global Perspectives). The panelists did not focus on specific global moments, rather interpreting colonial moments as longer lasting moments of clashing cultures, and reflected much more the question how colonizers imagined a world order for their colonized territories and tried to realize their dreams, of course with different success. The session with case studies on German, British, Russian, Japanese and US-American imperialism showed convincingly the contradictions between the self-perception of the colonizers and their civilizing mission and the daily imperatives of colonial rule that forced the occupiers to abandon or modify their conceptions of a colonial world order.

ULRIKE SCHAPER (Berlin) described how in the German colony of Cameroon the abstract aim to civilize the indigenous peoples by implementing European law was soon dismissed by the local officials who were guided by the need to maintain public peace and order and to stabilize the fragile position of the colonizers. They relied therefore on local intermediaries, native legal systems and brutal punishments which produced many unintended consequences like indigenous resistance and a weakening of the colonial authority. CHRISTIAN TEICHMANN (Berlin) sketched the flexibility with which Russia and the Soviet Union reacted to this problem at their imperial periphery in Central Asia by shifting their means and measures of integration and classification of peoples from religion via race to class in the period between 1863 and 1937. Another colonial power like the United States was able to blind out the practices of imperial suppression by discursive self-stylization of its colonial project as anti-colonial civilizing mission as FRANK SCHUMACHER (London, Ontario) exemplified with respect to the case of the Philippines and to transcend the myth of American exceptionalism even until today. The complexities and entanglements of Japanese imperialism were revealed by NADIN HÄE (Berlin) who used the example of penal codes to describe the double bind structure of Japan's civilizing mission. When Japan after 1868 followed a process of self-civilization to counter the threat of Western imperialism it pursued at the same time its own imperial expansion and civilizing mission toward backward people beyond Japan, beginning with the early effort to colonize Taiwan in 1874. Despite the clear differences between the various imperial settings the panel revealed fascinating similarities of colonial rule in different parts of the world, thereby

inspiring more research in that branch. Particularly if one integrates the transnational dimension of colonialism and looks at the interactions, mutual perceptions and cultural transfers between different imperial powers. Especially ULRIKE LINDNER (München) emphasized in her British-German-comparison the growing cooperation and exchange of knowledge of both imperial powers in Africa in the years before World War I, which could be interpreted as the creation of pan-European colonial concepts.

The discussion about imperialism can not be reduced to past centuries, since the global moment of 1989 left the United States as the only remaining superpower and unleashed a still lively debate about the role of America in the new world order at the beginning of the 21st century. One point of the discussion which the last panel of the session (Die USA nach 1990: Hegemonie im Weltsystem oder Imperium?) picked up is the question, if the USA should be interpreted better as an empire or in terms of hegemony. ANDREAS EXENBERGER (Innsbruck) tried to understand the American position in the contemporary world order by giving an overview over cycles of hegemonic rule and conceptions of world orders in the last five centuries, arguing that the present hegemony of the United States has a high potential of violence, so that the next war on global hegemony could be expected for 2030 or so. But the question remains open if an imperial order, a multi-polar balance or a global democratization might be the best solution for the future of the world. CHRISTIAN LEKON (Lefke) suggested, not to exclude hegemony and empire one another, since the former describes an international constellation, but the latter the internal character of a state. With regard to US presence in the Middle East, the United States since 1990 could therefore be interpreted as hegemony with (colonial) empire. If an historian develops clear categories by using sources and historical comparison, argued HANS-HEINRICH NOLTE (Barsinghausen), it should become clear that it is misleading to name the United States an empire, since an empire for example should have a monarchical head or should dominate its whole world (that means today the whole globe). The USA does not accept the restrictions of their national sovereignty imposed by globalization, but act as if they were sovereign. Therefore we should understand the United States today as a global nation that pursues a misguided national policy.

To sum it up, the whole session emphasized that world orders are challenged constantly by opposing forces, not exclusively but most spectacular in singular

global moments. Historians as well as contemporaries were always deeply concerned with world orders, but often overlook that they were unstable constructions, in the majority of cases more imagined than real, and always modified considerably by local conditions and the action of human beings.

Program of the Session:

Panel: The French Revolution in transnational perspective: breakthrough to a new world order (two parts) = Meeting of the International Commission for the History of the French Revolution, chairs: Alan Forrest, University of York, UK / Anna Maria Rao, University of Naples, IT

Chantal Kesteloot: "War and revolutionary past in Belgium history"

Alan Forrest: "La France, l'Europe et l'expérience de la guerre"

Nora Lafi: "Old regime and modernity in Egypt: Al-Jabarti and the ambiguous heritage of the French Revolution"

Marcel Dorigny: "Révolution française et Révolutions des colonies : Continuités et ruptures à travers l'Atlantique, des États généraux au Consulat. Esquisse d'un bilan des recherches depuis le bicentenaire de 1789"

Panel: World/ Global History and Slavery, chairs: Michael Zeuske, Universität Köln, DE / Ulrike Schmieder, Universität Hannover, DE

à Claus Föllberg-Stolberg: "Die Apologeten des status quo: Herrnhuter Missionare und die Sklaverei in der Karibik"

à Ulrike Schmieder: "Slavery, Abolition and Post-Emancipation in the French and Spanish Caribbean in the Web of Global Relations"

à Silke Strickrodt: "Der atlantische Sklavenhandel und ein sehr kleiner Ort in Afrika"

Michael Zeuske: "Makro und Mikro: Welt- und Globalgeschichten der Sklaverei"

Panel: Ordering the Colonial World - Comparative and Global Perspectives, chair: Sebastian Conrad, European University Institute, Florence, IT

Ulrike Schaper: "Law and Colonial Order in Cameroon under German Rule 1884-1916"

Christian Teichmann: "Cultivating the Periphery. Russia in Central Asia, 1865-1933"

Frank Schumacher: "The American Way of Empire: The United States and the Search for Colonial Order"

Nadin Heß: "Japan's Double Bind: Civilized Punishment in Colonial Taiwan"

Ulrike Lindner: "Colonialism as a European Project in Africa before 1914? Interactions and Mutual Perceptions between Neighbouring German and British Colonies in Africa"

Panel: Die USA nach 1990: Hegemonie im Weltsystem oder Imperium?, chair: Hans-Heinrich Nolte, Verein für Geschichte des Weltsystems, Barsinghausen, DE

Andreas Exenberger: "Brachiale Zyklen? Hegemoniale Weltordnung und Gewalt im Spiegel der Globalgeschichte"

Christian Lekon: "Die USA seit 1990: Hegemonie mit Imperium"

Hans-Heinrich Nolte: "Systematische Überlegungen zu Imperium und Hegemonie"

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