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The making of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (1982-2007): (dis)continuities, contradictions and alternatives

1. Boyd van Dijk

The Fourth Geneva Convention: Reinventing the Laws of War after WWII

The immediate postwar years witnessed a remarkable rise of humanitarianism and international law across the West, and far beyond. Epoch-making treaties and declarations were signed during the 1940s in San Francisco, Paris, New York, and Geneva on human rights, international cooperation, and the laws of war. Gathering in the capital of the former League of Nations, the international community signed the pivotal Fourth Geneva Convention on the law of armed conflict in August 1949.

This paper focuses on how this Convention, and its various preceding study-meetings, shaped the laws of war in an era dominated by decolonization, Cold War, and postwar reconstruction. Studying its genesis is of major relevance to the fields of political, international, *and* transnational history. This paper aims to shed light on the new ties between the rise of vibrant political ideologies and the rapidly changing codes and conduct of war after 1945. It explores how the (post-)war debates on the laws of war were entangled in processes as decolonization, state-building, and rising Cold War- tensions.

In the spirit of the international turn, this paper uses various transnational approaches to study the origins of the Convention - and its later implications. It seeks to understand how its drafting process determined the global protection of individuals on future battlefields.

2. Katharina Garvert-Huijnen

Partners in Europe? The German-Dutch relations and European integration (1945-1973)

At least since the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 it became clear that a majority of the Dutch had become Eurosceptic. Within the public debate today, even the point that the Dutch economy benefits from European integration to a high degree is contested. Officially, the Dutch government adopted this Eurosceptic mindset by proclaiming the end of the “Ever closer Union”. In reality, it supported an even closer financial and economic cooperation between the EU-member states due to the lasting crisis of the recent years.

It often seems as if this Dutch stance toward European integration is completely new. However, this is hardly the case. When looking at the very beginning of the European integration process it gets clear that the Dutch were very reluctant about Western European integration from the start – except for a few members of the European movement. Only the strong economic interdependence with Germany, alongside the outbreak of the Cold War, forced them to take part in the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, which was dominated by the French government.

Their discontent with the Community of The Six as well as their historic ties with Great Britain made the Dutch keen supporters of a EC membership of the British.

Because they also opposed a deepening of the EC into a political direction as suggested by Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle in 1961, they started a campaign to prevent the political union from going ahead without British participation. Well-known is that this *Préable Anglais* caused a conflict between the Dutch and the French, which resulted in the first big crisis of the European project during the 1960s. At the same time, historians rarely recognize the fact that it had also very negative effects on the bilateral relations with Germany.

The Dutch-German cooperation on the European level is often presented as close and without many difficulties. By combining the study of the bilateral German-Dutch relations and the economic intertwinement of both the countries with a research about Dutch and German European policies, it becomes possible to demystify not only the picture of the traditional pro-European Dutch and Germans but also their trouble-free relations.

Moreover, other underexposed facts can be uncovered by tracing various levels of interaction between both countries – by no means restricted to or by nation states, to follow Kiran Patel's approach.¹ To name one example, both the Federation of German industry (BDI) and the German Minister of Economics Ludwig Erhard advocated the same ideas about economic integration as the Dutch government at the time. Contrarily, the German government under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer followed a line that favoured politic aspects to economics, which was much more influenced by the wishes of the French.

1 Kiran Klaus Patel: Transnationale Geschichte - Ein neues Paradigma?, in: H-Soz-u-Kult, 02.02.2005, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/id=573&type=artikel>.

3. Lennaert van Heumen

Transatlantic contacts and early European integration, 1945-1957

My proposal is based on the first year of my PhD research and deals with the involvement of American organizations in the early European integration process, 1945-1957. The traditional historiography on European integration focused on how national governments and the leading politicians viewed their national interests and constructed their subsequent national policies towards the European project. As a consequence the role of private organizations and networks has received very limited academic attention. In recent years the transnational approach in political history has started to take into account the role of networks and the transfer of political ideas across national boundaries. Indeed, ideas about European integration did not emerge out of isolated, national political debates nor was European integration an isolated European process. It developed against the background of an intensive transatlantic exchange of ideas on Europeans cooperation and integration. Although the influence of the United States on the European integration process is widely debated, these studies focus almost exclusively on the formal American foreign policy, for instance the Marshall Plan. The post-war situation in Europe was, however,

seen in the United States as a national emergency where many and diverse organizations participated in the public debate on the best solution for creating a stable Europe. In my paper I will show the diversity of American organizations involved and what blueprints for European cooperation and integration they articulated. I will in particular focus on the American Committee on United Europe and their contacts with the European movement and affiliated organizations. These European organizations often explicitly sought to gain support within the United States. Through these contacts it is possible to show the distribution of American ideas on European cooperation and integration and their reception by European actors during the crucial early postwar period. For instance, Americans often linked the postwar situation in Europe to their own historical development as a nation in the late 18th century and consequently how their American model could help Europe, while Europeans held varied ideas about the applicability in Europe of American historical experiences and ideas. By looking at the involvement of diverse American organizations and their contacts with European organizations, not only the role of private organizations and networks in the integration process can be discussed, but it also gives more information about the various options and blueprints for European integration that were present in the early postwar period but have received little academic attention.

4. Richard McMahan

History creates transnational spatial patterns, which affect the spatiality of differentiated integration

Responding to the Euro crisis, David Cameron's government finally abandoned the traditional struggle of British governments to stay at the heart of European integration, while simultaneously pressing on the brake. This recognised and helps institutionalise the idea that there are different types and degrees of integration, as expressed in political phrases like variable geometry, multi-speed and *à la carte* Europe and in the academic term differentiated integration. An intricate matrix of intertwined institutions has developed to allow states to calibrate their participation in economic, political, cultural and security aspects of integration, according to desire and capability. European states selectively participate in combinations of organizations such as the EU, Nato and Council of Europe, and EU schemes like Schengen and the Euro. Overlapping memberships, long candidacy periods and association projects like the European Economic Area (EEA) and Partnership for Peace create geographically differentiated constellations of countries with differing degrees and types of integration. The integration zone thus has nebulous frontiers, fading into its surrounding international environment via gradations of association and influence. More informally, states form coalitions and vary in negotiating style, implementation of European measures and public ideas about integration.

Enlargement and economic crisis have powerfully stimulated calls for differentiated integration by increasing socio-cultural diversity and the range of positions to be accommodated. Newer members such as Sweden actively promote diversification.

Successive treaties since 1993 have therefore changed Europe's motto from 'ever closer union' to 'unity in diversity' and progressively introduced spatial differentiation mechanisms like opt-outs, subsidiarity, enhanced cooperation and the open method of coordination.

Several recent academic books recognise this increasing prominence of differentiated integration. Some of their contributors recognise that differentiation has striking transnational spatial patterns, such as the 'northern' Euroscepticism of Britain and Scandinavia and the core-periphery structure of EU enlargement. I make a novel argument about this differentiated desire and capability of regions to participate in integration. I claim that it is influenced by complex, historically emerging, transnational spatial patterns of socio-cultural similarity and difference. These affect factors like the state differences to be reconciled in integration deals and the ease of negotiation. Scholars recognize such regional patterns, shaped by history, in factors like capitalism, nationalism and democracy. Civic or ethnic traditions of nationalism for example influence conceptions of European identity and have long been ascribed a particular east-west geography. Religions, dynastic empires, economic systems, socio-cultural transformations of modernity and formative experiences like the Reformation, Enlightenment and Napoleonic conquests shape these enduring transnational geographies of values, discourses, communication codes, institutions and conditions.

My paper empirically examines two interacting socio-cultural factors that help shape the spatial patterns of integration. One case study, Western Europe's international relations culture of demilitarized relations between neighbouring countries, is part of a complex of mutually reinforcing and spatially correlating factors of wealth, liberal modernity and integration. Case study two, northern Euroscepticism, illustrates that Europe is crosscut with potentially dis-integrative cultural patterns like northern Protestantism and Anglophone exceptionalism.

5. Tommaso Milani

From laissez-faire to supranational planning: The economic debate within Federal Union (1938-1945)

European integration has been at first explained as a process prompted by the spread of federalist ideas [see H. Brugmans, *L'idée européenne, 1918-1965* (1965); W. Lipgens, *Die Anfänge der europäischen Einigungspolitik, 1945-1950* (1977)]. On the one hand, as stressed by subsequent generations of scholars, this approach overlooks the strictly diplomatic dimension of integration, where national interests and intergovernmental bargains took – and apparently still take – the lion's share; on the other, this idealist interpretation tends to present «federalism» as an autonomous body of thought which, despite some marginal differences and disagreements, holds at least a strong commitment to the principle of supranationalism.

This paper calls into question this overoptimistic assumption about the degree of internal consistency of federalist thinking. More specifically, this paper argues that, rather than a self-standing pattern of thought, federalism would be better regarded as a prism used by different ideologies, cultures, and discourses to express their dissatisfaction with the nation state; these ideologies, cultures, and discourses, however, inevitably collided when laying out a constructive vision of what a «federation» ought to be, because of their diverging aims and views about a desirable social order.

A study of the early years of Federal Union, the leading federalist association in Britain from 1938 onwards, provides evidence supporting the main argument of the paper. Despite being officially committed to the establishment of a political federation of democracies, its members split on several other issues. A particularly striking case is economics. Here, the organization shifted from allegiance to nineteenth-century liberalism, emphasizing the benefits of free trade while keeping a minimum of centralized force in order to prevent interstate rivalries from boiling over into war, to a radical advocacy of supranational planning, aimed at enforcing social rights and welfare entitlements granted to all the citizens of its member states. Documents demonstrate that the increasingly left-leaning tilt of Federal Union played a part in alienating some of its most distinguished supporters – including Sir Lionel Curtis and Sir William Beveridge – , failing at the same time to get in tune with the British people at large. It therefore contributed to the negligible influence of Federal Union on British foreign policy in the post-war period.

The economic debate within Federal Union may be of some interest for scholars involved in the field of New Political History for a number of reasons. First, it highlights the interplay between international and domestic issues in shaping the notion of «federation», thus deepening our understanding of one of the key concepts in the history of European integration. Second, it unfolds the transnational impact of ideas – in this case insights about economic planning, owing much to American and Soviet debates – over a distinct national culture, the British one. Third, it underscores the role of discursive contestation in explaining the rise and fall of British federalism.

6. Silvia Giulia Pirola

Making sense of Europe

Compagni, Amici and the first elections by direct universal suffrage to the European Parliament, 1969-1979 The overall aim of my dissertation is to understand how the representation, orchestration and organization of elections take place, and how do these actions contribute to the function and construction of elections as a democratic ritual rather than an automatic event. The empirical examples taken into consideration are the first direct elections to the European Parliament and how they were prepared by the two main parties in the Italian political system – namely Democrazia Cristiana and Partito Comunista Italiano. In this conference, I wish to

present part of the analysis of the external party performance in promoting and presenting the elections to the electorate through their own political publications.

7. Jouan Quentin

The Europeanization of trade unions in a historical perspective: theoretical framework and analysis of the Belgian case

So far, the interconnections between European integration and the labor movement have been mostly studied through the prism of the existing transnational structures, their competences, their power or their management. The purpose of my research is to focus, instead, on the national level and, hereby, try to understand how national trade unions are reacting to the European integration and how they possibly make use of it to achieve nationally-defined goals, as well as their stand towards the European project. Moreover, I want to embrace a transnational perspective, exploring the cases of Belgian, German and French trade unions between 1972 and 1986.

Working on three different countries, which all have different traditions and practices regarding trade unionism, I needed to sketch a common framework within which I can analyze and compare the trade unions between them. I've therefore decided, also in a wish to bring history closer to other social sciences, to make use of the concept/idea of Europeanization (hence the title of my research's project: *Towards a europeanization of national trade unions? The Belgian, French and German cases (1972-1986)*). However, 'europeanization' is, in a way, a catch-all word, encompassing various meanings and concrete applications. I had to precise how I was going to use this word and for what purpose. Drawing on different concepts and theories from social sciences I came up with the following definition: "The process in which national actors take into account the perceived European reality **and** get involved in the European political system, the latter being considered as a structure of opportunity and a place of debate, permitting or harming the achievement of their nationally-defined objectives".

My goal is twofold. I try, first, to grasp how trade unions think about Europe and its role, from a national point of view. On the other hand, I also measure the concrete involvement of national trade unions inside the European political system. In short, I'm studying both their vision and their action regarding Europe, and more specifically the EEC.

In this perspective, I would be happy to have the opportunity to present my research at the "International Conference Political History". After a brief presentation of my theoretical work, I would like to give an overview of the researches that I have conducted so far, that is the case of Belgian trade unions. I will explain what their expectations and wishes regarding the EEC were, what was the place of Europe in the unions' life and how (and for what) they acted – as national actors – at the community level.

I've made the choice to study Europe from below, in a transnational perspective and with the help of tools designed in other social sciences. In this regard, I am convinced that my presentation could fit in your program. It would be, at the very least, a real opportunity for me to discuss and confront my hypotheses with researchers – both senior and junior - having different backgrounds and sensibilities.

8. Daniel Stinsky

Technocratic internationalism in the aftermath of war: The origins of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

This paper addresses the conference theme on European Integration and New Political History. It is about international organizations dedicated to economic cooperation for the purposes of relief and reconstruction in postwar Europe. It focuses on the establishment of the hitherto scholarly neglected United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), an all-European organization predating the Iron Curtain and the institutions of Western European integration.¹ The paper argues that ECE was a *kopfgeburt* of the planning-mindedness of the immediate postwar years and became a testing ground for ideas of technocratic internationalism rooting in the interwar period. By framing matters of international cooperation as technical rather than political problems, actors at ECE sought to circumvent rising Cold War tensions and embraced administrative governance conducted by experts and planners rather than by diplomats and politicians.

While my overall dissertation project is about the function of ECE within the contexts of the Cold War and European economic cooperation in a longer timeframe, this paper will be based on one of my chapters which is dedicated to the immediate postwar years. By focusing on ECE as a UN organization and revisiting the years prior to the Schuman declaration, the project takes up recent calls to decentralize or “provincialize” the EC/EU in the history of international cooperation in Europe.² The history of European integration is considered to currently undergo a process of opening up toward interdisciplinary research as well as to methodological and substantial discourses within the discipline of history itself.³ The various trends and developments summarized under the label New Political History present a particularly interesting challenge as they add new perspectives to an already complex and multi-layered field. This project takes up inspiration from several approaches associated with New Political History, most prominently by choosing to focus on the role of experts and international civil servants, actors beyond the categories of the nation

¹ On ECE, see Yves Berthelot, ed. *Unity and Diversity in Development Ideas. Perspectives from the Un Regional Commissions*, United Nations Intellectual History Project (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Václav Kostecký, *The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe: The Beginning of a History* (Göteborg 1989); Gunnar Myrdal, "Twenty Years of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe," *International Organization* 22(1968).

² Kiran Klaus Patel, "Provincialising European Union: Co-Operation and Integration in Europe in a Historical Perspective," *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 04 (2013).

³ ———, "Europäische Integrationsgeschichte Auf Dem Weg Zur Doppelten Neuorientierung. Ein Forschungsbericht," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 50(2010).

state and the level of high politics.⁴ The project asks for the discursive construction of a distinction between “political” and “technical” questions of international cooperation within the contexts of postwar reconstruction and growing international tension. The concepts of depoliticization⁵, social engineering⁶ and expert power⁷ thus play crucial roles in addressing early attempts at institutionalized economic cooperation in Europe after 1945.

9. Bart De Sutter

The making of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (1982-2007): (dis)continuities, contradictions and alternatives

Since the 1970s and the end of the Cold War the discourse on human rights has become omnipresent in international politics. Concomitantly, civil society and more particularly transnational human rights activism expanded enormously, evolving into a sizeable lobby. In 1993 the UN World Conference on Human Rights was attended by more than 800 NGOs. One could applaud the proliferation of human rights NGOs (HROs) but one should also wonder why so many exist. Although historical research on human rights is burgeoning, research on NGOs is still in its infancy. What seems to be missing is a history of human rights organizations that examines how these entities are positioned in the field of human rights. Applying a transnational approach I focus in my PhD research on the tension between their universalist mission and self-interested tendencies using the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) as a case study. Primarily created by the predecessor of Human Rights Watch and the Ford Foundation, the IHF became the symbol of so-called Helsinki human rights activism that monitored the human rights practice of signatories of the Helsinki Accords (1975). Current narratives on the IHF emphasize its significant role in the end of the Cold War and describe the relations between the Helsinki committees as a transnational, horizontal network of principled actors. By not taking into consideration how and why the IHF was created in the first place, these accounts, however, do not allow us to understand the emergence and evolution of Helsinki human rights activism. Therefore, we need to scrutinize the characteristics of the organization in its contemporary context. Based on archival material from the IHF, Human Rights Watch and the Ford Foundation my contribution would focus on the goals and methods of the IHF and its relationships with other actors. It will question why an European-based organisation was created by actors from the US and why competing alternatives both in the US and in Europe were perceived as less promising. I will argue that the field of human rights activism is shaped by both principles and interests.

⁴ Sandrine Kott, "International Organizations - a Field of Research for a Global History," *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History*, online edition 8, no. 3 (2011).

⁵ Willibald Steinmetz and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, "The Political as Communicative Space in History: The Bielefeld Approach," in *Writing Political History Today*, ed. Willibald Steinmetz, Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (Frankfurt / New York: Campus, 2013).

⁶ Thomas Etzemüller, ed. *Die Ordnung Der Moderne: Social Engineering Im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009).

⁷ Harry Collins and Robert Evans, *Rethinking Expertise* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007); Joe Moran, "The Fall and Rise of the Expert," *Critical Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2011); Alexander Nützenadel, *Stunde Der Ökonomen: Wissenschaft, Politik Und Expertenkultur in Der Bundesrepublik 1949 - 1974* (Göttingen 2005).