Ruptures and Continuities in European History (16th - 20th Centuries). Periodizations in History, Historiography and the History of Historiography

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Datum, Ort: 24.04.2008–27.04.2008, Berlin
Bericht von: Rudolf Kucera, Berliner Kolleg für Vergleichende Geschichte Europas; Jannis Panagiotidis, European University Institute, Florence; Peder Roberts, Stanford University

The Berlin conference on „Ruptures and Continuities in European History" was the second in a series of annual Graduate Conferences in European History (GRACEH). It was organized and conducted by three established historical research institutes: the Berlin School for Comparative European History (Berliner Kolleg für Vergleichende Geschichte Europas, BKVGE), the Central European University (CEU), and the European University Institute (EUI). Funding came from the Gerda Henkel Stiftung and the Gemeinnützige Hertie-Stiftung. The conference gathered PhD candidates from across Europe and North America to discuss core theoretical and methodological issues connected with the problems of historical ruptures and continuities as well as with related models of periodization. Following a welcome and opening address from Jürgen Kocka (BKVGE) on April 24, the academic programme began on April 25.

It was organized around three parallel panels of papers framed by keynote lectures from distinguished senior historians. The first keynote lecture was given by GEORG G. IGGERS (University at Buffalo), the second from CHRIS LORENZ (Free University of Amsterdam) and the third one from JEAN BOUTIER (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales / Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin). They all emphasized problems of periodization, however from a different point of view. While Iggers concentrated largely on the periodization within the history of historiography, Lorenz elaborated on the tensions between historiography and memory with special reference to contemporary history, and analyzed the application of historical arguments in political discourses. Boutier than elaborated on the early modern history of European science academies and pointed out problems regarding the periodization, which occur when the entangled history of European science is taken into account.

The first of the three panels was organized around the theme „Making Sense of Ruptures and Continuities". The first session was dedicated to „Historiography and the Nation" (chaired by Nenad Stefanov, BKVGE). MARIA FALINA (CEU) examined the Serbian Orthodox Church to demonstrate the enduring importance of religious identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and their co-existence with modern national paradigms. BENNO GAMMERL (Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin) tracked changes in images of masculinity in West Germany around 1968 with special reference to the context of homosexuality. Using „lonely heart ads" from gay magazines, Gammerl identified some major changes as well as continuities in the image of ideal male partners. MIHAI OLARU (CEU) analyzed the persistence of „the phanariot epoch" as a historiographical label roughly covering the eighteenth century in Romania. Olaru demonstrated how a national discourse could persist even within a communist historiography and it's proclaimed, but seldom realized internationalism. JASON D. HANSON (University of Illinois) has exposed the year 1871 as a decisive rupture in German national thinking and the formation of a German national identity. Hanson highlighted the strong continuities between the periods before and after the German unification and thereby questioned the relevance of political ruptures for cultural history. Finally, GABRIELA POPA (EUI Florence) focused on World War II commemorations in post-Soviet Moldova. Elaborating mostly on monuments, she demonstrated persuasively that they continued to exist even after the fall of the Soviet Union and were re-appropriated by local communities and within new commemorative practices, creating a rich syncretism of Soviet and post-Soviet symbols.

In the afternoon, the panel continued with a session dedicated to „Contested Memories"

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(chaired by Gabriele Metzler, Humboldt University of Berlin). First, BALÁZS KISS (ELTE University Budapest) showed how the issue of language and terminology influenced historical memory in Hungary and Slovakia. BÁLINT VARGA (ELTE, Budapest) also used the Slovak–Hungarian case to analyze struggles for symbolical places important to both national historiographies. Taking the Děvín border castle as an example, he scrutinized how a single „place of memory" was appropriated by every political system since the late nineteenth century.

Moving from there to a comparison of German and Italian historians in the 1950s, MARCEL VOM LEHN (Free University of Berlin) compared the public commitments of German and Italian historians in the 1950s. In particular, he accentuated attempts to come to terms with the totalitarian past in both countries and called into question the widely held view that the end of Italian fascism and German Nazism constituted a distinctive historical rupture. SILVIU HARITON (CEU) also focused on war and memory and criticized the fact that World War I has mainly been interpreted in the terms of Western historiography, thus relegating the experiences of Eastern and East-Central Europe to a subordinate position. Closing the session, ADAM KOZUCHOWSKI (Polish Academy of Sciences) analyzed historiographicaldiscourses about the „finished histories" of two major European Empires, Austria-Hungary and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The contributions to the final session on „Historical Ruptures and Individual Experiences" (chaired by Sylvia Tschopp, University of Augsburg) largely focused on the relevance of established historical ruptures for the life experiences of different historical actors. UKU LEMBER (CEU) explored the possibilities of establishing a new periodization for modern Estonian history based on biographical experiences of predefined social groups. He called the established periodization into question and argued for greater focus on individual experience. MARK JONES (EUI Florence) made the argument that individual life experiences largely reflect major political ruptures. Jones used oral history evidence to argue that the main political ruptures in the history of the twentieth-century Europe heavily influenced specific biographies throughout the continent. PASCALE FALEK (EUI Florence) examined the issue of Jewish women in interwar Poland and demonstrated how certain patterns of their behaviour, such as low political participation, persisted beyond the major political rupture of 1918. Like Gammerls contribution, Faleks paper also introduced the neglected issue of gender. Turning back to historiography, CHERYL SMEALL (McGill University, Montreal) focused on the developments within the biographical genre in the last two centuries. Closing the third session and also the panel as a whole, JORGE LUENGO (EUI Florence) demonstrated that the Spanish liberal revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries transgresses the established historiographical rupture between an early modern and a modern era.

In the discussion some of the participants argued that major historical ruptures are still closely connected to political history, for example to the major political shifts in the history of East-Central Europe during the twentieth century. By contrast, other discussants emphasized the importance of cultural continuities and individual experiences, which did not necessarily correspond to political ruptures. Secondly, the question of whether the very concept of historical rupture is to be restricted to modern industrialized societies received some attention. Although most discussants rejected this proposition, it was pointed out that while the idea of rupture itself was not tied to such societies, there was still a very specific mode of immediate perception of historical ruptures. This was exemplified by reference to the „broadcasted revolutions" of 1989 that illustrated the influence of modern media upon both the perception and the construction of major historical turning-points.

The second of the three panels was organized around the theme „Reassessing Time, Space and Knowledge". Its first session (chaired by Laszlo Kontler, CEU) concentrated on the „threshold of modernity". ILONA DÉNES (CEU) argued for the existence of a distinct „early modern" historical epoch between the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment. THEODORE CHRISTOV (UCLA) proposed that the Cambridge School of the 1960s – associated

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with scholars such as Quentin Skinner and John Pocock – has created a false rupture between the „domestic" seventeenth and the „international" eighteenth centuries and called for a reevaluation of these labels. Continuing the theme of periodization and disciplinary identity, VLADIMIR RYZHKOV (CEU) discussed the philosophy of history employed by the Russian historians Mikhail Scherbatov (1733-1790) and Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1826). Ryzhkov pointed out that these scholars saw history as „*magistra vitae*" based on essential immutability of human nature. EVELINE GERDINA BOUWERS (EUI) shifted the focus to iconography, arguing that the duality of the monarch's body – personal and political – persisted as an iconographic convention well beyond the French Revolution. The final paper in the session was given by JEFF TAYLOR (CEU), who discussed the Hungarian art market at the turn of the twentieth century. Focusing on economic forces as well as trends in art itself, Taylor argued that in a sense „the market made modernism".

The second session – „Spatial Dimensions of Historical Change" (chaired by Kristin Kopp, University of Missouri) – opened with a paper from ADAM MESTYAN (CEU) on opera houses in Cairo and Istanbul as windows into cultural and social relations. Mestyan examined the concepts of imperialism and nationalism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Eastern Mediterranean, drawing from and critiquing scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm and Michael Mann. PAULO ARANHA (EUI) challenged the traditional narrative that has dominated historical interpretation of the „Malabar Rites" and Chinese Catholic rites, which both incorporated local practices into Catholic ritual.

The panel then turned to architecture and historical periodization with a paper from JAKOB HORT (BKVGE), who analyzed embassies as specifically national representations in particular historical contexts. Hort argued that while the architecture of embassies was also influenced by local forces such as urban geography, the buildings nevertheless reflected the evolution of the international system during the twentieth century. LAURA CASOLA (University of Leipzig) examined patterns of migration between Europe and South America's „southern cone" (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile). Casola argued that European communities in South America constituted a stable „imagined community" and their influence on contemporary European history should be recognized despite their geographic location across the Atlantic. Finally, ANDREAS LEUTZSCH (University of Bielefeld) gave an interpretation of modern history in terms of the emergence of a World Society through dialectic of Western revolutions since 1000 AD, drawing from the work of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy.

The final session – „Production of Knowledge" (chaired by Jeanette Madarász, Wisenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung) started with a paper from KATLIN STRANER (CEU) on the reception of the idea of biological evolution in Hungary between the 1840s and 1870s. EIKE-CHRISTIAN HEINE (TU Braunschweig) then discussed canal and railway projects in Germany, Britain and Sweden during the late nineteenth century. While his account did not dismiss periodizations entirely, Heine emphasized that attempts to fully understand specific networks of actors, technologies, and social-political-economic circumstances inevitably undermined attempts at longue-durée narratives. PEDER ROBERTS (Stanford University) examined the shifting role of science in British and Norwegian engagement with the Antarctic during the first sixty years of the twentieth century, arguing for a periodization shaped by broad political currents.

JOCHEN MAYER (University of Edinburgh) investigated changes in the „logic of insurance" in recent German history. Mayer argued that the development of social policy should be understood in the context of the parallel development of the social sciences and the nation-state from the late nineteenth century onwards. Finally, MICHAL ALTBAUER-RUDNIK (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) examined changing perceptions of „love sickness" in Europe from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Altbauer-Rudnik focused both on shifts in medical theory and in notions of romantic love within European societies. She argued that changing cultural norms in matters such as female sexual desire provided the dynamic framework within

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which medical conditions were constructed.

With such a diverse set of papers the panel discussions were inevitably wide-ranging. Despite the skepticism expressed by many contributors about the possibility for broad periodizations across national boundaries and the problem of conceiving even the most significant historical events as ubiquitous ruptures, the fact that these terms have provoked such stimulating discussion suggests they retain analytical value. Many panelists convincingly applied local or regional periodizations that challenged established views, thus echoing recent historiographic trends toward regional histories and pluralistic narratives.

In the third panel – organized under the rubric of „Radicalizations and Democratizations" – the first session dealt with the „The Age of Extremes" (chaired by Arnd Bauerkämper, BKVGE). It focused mainly on the question of how individuals in that age conceptualized their own epoch and history, be it by envisioning their socialistic future, as in the case of the Austrian Social Democrats in the inter-war period (JOACHIM HÄBERLEN, BKVGE), or by anticipating a clash of old and new man, like the Finnish philosopher Olavi Paavolainen (VILLE LAAMANEN, University of Turku), or by trying to (eventually unsuccessfully) create a Marxist periodization of Hungarian national history after the Second World War (JÓZSEF LITKEI, UCLA). On the other hand, MANFRED ZELLER (Universität der Bundeswehr, Hamburg) revealed how football fans' culture in the Soviet Union was influenced by the political ruptures of (post-) Stalinism and was thus characterized by specific ruptures that preceded the political reverberations of Perestroika.

The panelists were dealing with the relationship between the perspectives of the actors on the one hand and historiographic constructions of historical periods on the other. Attempts to reconcile these two perspectives were discussed in detail. As the discussion revealed, there is no panacea. On the contrary, historians should bear these different perspectives in mind in order to be self-reflexive and to critically check the narratives that are constantly employed in historiography.

The second session (chaired by Klaus Gestwa, University of Tübingen) dealt with „Coming to terms with Stalinism". It provided a view on the histories of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe from the viewpoint of the Jewish minority (papers by IZABELA KAZEJAK and JANNIS PANAGIOTIDIS, both EUI Florence). The session also placed the well-established ruptures in the history of the Eastern bloc – the Hungarian and Polish revolts in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968 – into a transnational perspective. LUMINITA GATEJEL (BKVGE) interpreted the rupture of 1956 both as an event and as a non-event in the entangled histories of the states of the Eastern bloc. MATEUSZ HARTWICH (BKVGE) scrutinized the impact of political unrest on a local level in a Polish tourist region in 1956. In the Krkonoše – Mountains, the relaxation of the border regime led to an influx of West German tourists who had been expelled from the region only a few years before. ZDENĚK NEBŘENSKÝ (BKVGE) interpreted 1968 as a belated de-Stalinization in the ČSSR and as an event that has to be seen in the overall context of the worldwide protest movement.

As Klaus Gestwa put it, the papers and the discussion provided some „fresh thinking across borders" and a kind of transnationalization of established historical ruptures. Thus questioning the historical ruptures established by traditional historiography does not necessarily mean discarding them and constructing new ones. Indeed, it can even be helpful and illuminating to interpret them from different viewpoints and reassess their meaning in different contexts.

The third session, entitled „Transitions to Democracy", was chaired by PAVEL KOLÁŘ (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, Potsdam). It encompassed papers on a variety of topics, ranging from the democratization of Greece in the second half of the twentieth century, as seen through the history of the Communist Party of Greece (THODOROS SOULELES, FU Berlin) to the nexus of democratization and motorization in Portugal in the 1970s (M. LUÍSA SOUSA, New University of Lisbon) and Latin American migration to Spain (FELIPE RUBIO, University of Leipzig) to the vetting of the East German *Volkspolizei* after 1989 (EDWARD HAMMELRATH, University of Memphis) and the re-creation of com-

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munal property in the post-socialist Romanian forest (OANA MATEESCU, University of Michigan).

The core of the discussion was about the many different '-zation' suffixes. These words usually imply a movement in time towards an often unspecified goal and implicitly assume a normal path of historical development. In contrast to this deliberately retrospective conception of a historical rupture, the *Wende* of 1989-90 in Germany has been conceptualized not as a return to some kind of „good" German past by the historical actors, but as a decisive break with an authoritarian heritage.

The lively final discussion (moderated by Bernhard Struck, University of St. Andrews) summarized the whole conference. It concentrated mainly on the relationship between the construction of historical ruptures by historians and other actors *ex post* and the perception of ruptures by the contemporaries. Some participants argued that the very concept of historical rupture is a social construct reflecting the respective cultural context of its emergence. On the other hand, some major historical ruptures (such as the French Revolution or the upheavals of 1989-91) were taken as evidence for the capacity of individuals to immediately perceive certain historical events as major shifts that would significantly influence their future lives.

To sum up, the participants continuously and intensively discussed multiple and alternative ruptures and continuities, conceptions of time, actors and the historiography of historical periods and transnational aspects of periodization. Despite the variety of topics, the presentations and debates demonstrated that historians can question, deconstruct and reconsider established ruptures in historiography, gaining some fresh and new insights without having to discard the established wisdom altogether.

Altogether, the conference resulted in fresh and lively discussions on some of the core concepts used in the discipline of history, which are often implicitly applied but seldom conceptually reflected. The conference achieved this major goal and also provided young scholars from across the world with the opportunity for stimulating and fruitful intellectual exchange on their historical studies.

Conference Overview:

Welcome: Jürgen Kocka (BKVGE)

Opening lecture: Georg G. Iggers (University at Buffalo)
Ruptures and Continuities in Modern European History from a Global Perspective. The Problem of Periodization in History, Historiography and the History of Historiography

Keynote lectures: Chris Lorenz (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
„Hot" History. Some Reflections on History and Time
Jean Boutier (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales Paris/Centre Marc Bloch Berlin)
Continuities and Ruptures in the Age of Academies. A Comparative Approach to Italy and France from the 15th to the 18th Century

Session: Making Sense of Ruptures or Continuities 1: Historiography and the Nation (Comment by Nenad Stefanov, BKVGE, Berlin)

Maria Falina, CEU/Mainz
Religion in Modern Political Thought and National Self Representation: A Serbian Example

Benno Gammerl, BKVGE
Queer periods. Post-1945 Historiography and Homosexual Emancipation in West Germany¨

Mihai Vasile Olaru, CEU
The Phanariot Epoch in the Romanian Historiography: an Enduring Label

Jason D. Hanson, University of Illinois
The Continuity of Kulturnation: Statistical Demography and Images of the German Nation after 1871

Gabriela Popa, EUI
Challenging the „Sacred": Second World War Monuments in post-Soviet Moldova

Session: Making Sense of Ruptures or Continuities 2: Contested Memories (Comment by Gabriele Metzler, Humboldt Universität Berlin)

Balázs Kiss, ELTE Budapest
Terminological Problems in the Periods of Slovak-Hungarian Historiography

Marcel vom Lehn, FU Berlin
Historians Dealing with National Socialism and Fascism in Public. Comparing Germany and Italy (1943/45 – 1960)

Bàlint Varga, ELTE Budapest

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The Devin Castle Between Nation-Buildings: Ruptures and Continuities in Slovak, Hungarian and German Memory
Silviu Hariton, CEU
The Great War and a European Memory (Anglophone and Francophone Exploration Applicable to East Central Europe)
Adam Kożuchowski, Polish Academy of Sciences
Finished Histories: The Cases of Austria-Hungary and of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

Session: Making Sense of Ruptures or Continuities 3: Historical Ruptures and Individual Experiences (Comment by Silvia Serena Tschopp, Universität Augsburg)
Uku Lember, CEU
Towards a Radical Democratisation of Time? Periodisation of Estonian Contemporary History (1940-1991) based on Life-Story Research.
Mark Jones, EUI
In Defense of Historical Periods?
Cheryl Smeall, McGill University
The Biography of Biography (20th century)
Pascale Falek, EUI
1918: A Turning Point for Woman's Condition? Jewish Women's Empowerment in Poland? Changes and Continuities
Jorge Luengo, EUI/BKVGE
The Spanish Liberal Revolution and the Problem of Periodization

Session: Reassessing Time, Space and Knowledge 1: Threshold of modernity (Comment by László Kontler, CEU)
Theodore Christov, UCLA
The View Beyond Cambridge: The „International Turn" and the Foundations of Modern Political Thought
Jeff Taylor, CEU
Modernism and Dead-ends: the Death of the Salon System and the Rise of the Hungarian Art Market
Ilona Dénes, CEU
The Alternatives to the „Early Modern Period" in the Long Dureé
Vladimir Ryzhkov, CEU
The Russian Historiography before Historicism
Eveline Gerdina Bouwers, EUI
The Emperors two Bodies. Revisiting Ancien Regime Iconography in Napoleonic France

Session: Reassessing Time, Space and Knowledge 2: Spatial Dimensions of Historical Change (Comment by Dr. Kristin Kopp, University of Missouri)
Adam Mestyan, CEU
Post Imperial Times of Pre-Nationalism. Comparative Units and Narratives
Paolo Aranha, EUI
Chinese Rites and Malabar Rites: Early XVII Century Roman Catholic Challenges to Eurocentrism
Jakob Hort, BKVGE
The Architecture of Diplomacy - Linking Changes in International Relations to Developments in Art and Architecture
Laura A Casola, University of Leipzig
Professional Migrations from American Southern Cone to Europe. The Closing of a Circle and the Opening of a Gap
Andreas Leutzsch, University of Bielefeld
Change and Persistence: The World Society as the End of Western History

Session: Reassessing Time, Space and Knowledge 3: Production of Knowledge (Comment by Dr. Jeannette Z. Madarász, WZB Berlin)
Katalin Stráner, CEU
The Origins of Species. Rupture or Continuity? Hungarian Perspectives on the Evolution Revolution
Eike-Christian Heine, TU-Braunschweig Industrialisation – Infrastructure Construction Sites in the 19th century
Peder Roberts, Stanford University
Scientific Authority and European Modernity, 1900-1960
Jochen Mayer, University of Edinburgh
Social Knowledge, Unemployment Insurance and the New Political Geometry of Social Spaces in Germany and France (1960–1980).
Michal Altbauer-Rudnik, Jerusalem University
From Love Melancholy to Erotomania: Ruptures and Continuities in the Medical Diagnosis of Love Sickness, 16th – 20th century

Session: Radicalisations and Democratisations 1: An Age of Extremes? (Comment by Arnd Bauerkämper, BKVGE)
Joachim Häberlen, BKVGE
Heroes of a New Time
Ville Laamanen, Turku University
New Religion and New Man. A Vision of a

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Breaking Point in Culture in the Interwar Period

Manfred Zeller, Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg

Moscow without Meat. Soviet Fan Culture and the Periodisation in the Late Soviet Union

József Litkei, UCLA

The Periodization Debate that Did not Take Place, and yet it Mattered: The Question of Continuity and Rupture in Shaping Hungarian Marxist History Writing, 1949-1950.

Session: Radicalisations and Democratisations 2: Coming to Terms with Stalinism (Comment by Klaus Gestwa, Universität Tübingen)

Jannis Panagiotidis, EUI

1948/1949 as a Rupture in Soviet Jewish History

Izabela Kazejak, EUI

Periodisation of the History of the Jews in Eastern and Central Europe Between 1945 and 1968 : A Proposal of a New Perspective

Luminita Gatejel, BKVGE

Crisis and Reassessment. Eastern Europe after 1956

Mateusz J. Hartwich, BKVGE

De-Stalinization in the Province. Tourism and Political Change in Poland around 1956

Zdeněk Nebřenský, BKVGE

The Prague Spring as a Rupture of the Stalinist Discourse in Czechoslovakia

Session: Radicalisations and Democratisations 3: Transitions to Democracy? (Comment by Pavel Kolář, ZZF Potsdam)

Thodoros Souleles, affiliated BKVGE

The Greek Left from Exile to Government: Ruptures in the History of Greek Democratization

M. Luísa Sousa, New University of Lisbon

Motorisation in Portugal in the 20th Century – Questioning the Car's Role in the Period of Transition to Democracy, 1974-1976

Felipe Rubio, Leipzig/Ontario

Latin America in Spain: A Change of Tide

Edward Hamelrath, University of Memphis

Dissolution or Continuation by Another Name?: Vetting the Volkspolizei in the State of Saxony after the Fall of the GDR 1989-1994.

Oana Mateescu, University of Michigan

Re-creating Communal Property in Post-socialist Romania: Contemporaneity and the Necessary Anachronism

Summary of discussions in the panels, plenary debate and concluding remarks (chaired by Bernhard Struck, University of St. Andrews)

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