

Second ENIUGH-Congress: Introductory Remarks

Veranstalter: European Network in World and Global History (ENIUGH)

Datum, Ort: 03.07.2008–05.07.2008, Dresden

Bericht von: Matthias Middell, Global and European Studies Institute i. Gr., Universität Leipzig

Report by Matthias Middell (University of Leipzig)

The Second European Congress on World and Global History took place in Dresden from 3 to 5 July 2008 and was attended by more than 250 scholars from some 23 European countries and profited at the same time from the presence of world historians from Australia, China, Japan, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, and the US, some of them taking the opportunity to move on from the annual conference of the World History Association in London only few days earlier. Thus, an excellent opportunity arose to compare the state of the art of an America-based organisation and its European counterpart within ten days. The succession of these two conferences was no coincidence but planned for a long time. After all, the presence of board members from both associations made it possible to meet on July 1 with representatives of the recently established Asian Association of World Historians and with colleagues from Africa and Latin America to launch a world-wide network of organisations focusing on world and global history (NOGWHISTO) that will apply for membership with the Comité International des Sciences Historiques (CISH) at its next congress in Amsterdam in 2010.

The Dresden conference was organised under the title „World Orders“ by the European Network in Universal and Global History (www.eniugh.org), an organisation that has developed over the past six years into a very active platform for communication and cooperation in the new field of global history. Its official journals „Comparativ. Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung“ and „geschichte.transnational“ have become valuable instruments for the publication of results from excellent scholarship, for the ex-

change of information about recent developments in the field and for methodological debate. With its conferences held every three years (for reports on the 2005 conference see: <http://geschichte-transnational.clio-online.net/tagungsberichte>) it becomes more and more a platform for the presentation of new trends – often visible at first hand in PhD-projects – and for the discussion either of historiographical traditions or/ and theoretical and narrative framings in global history.

The following general remarks introduce a series of reports on individual panels at the Dresden conference.

The organisers thank both the Saxon Ministry of Science and Culture and the University of Dresden for regional support and a warm welcome in a charming city and a beautiful centre of fine arts which gave the conference a nice ambiance. The Saxon Minister of Science and Culture, Dr. Eva-Maria Stange as well as Prof. Reiner Pommerin from the History Department of the Technical University echoed in their addresses to the conference the attention Saxony pays to globalisation and its own transnational connectedness both in academic and economic matters.

The conference was funded by the Saxon Ministry and the University of Leipzig, but also from the German Research Council, the German Academic Exchange Service, the European Science Foundation, the European Commission as well as from a number of private companies sponsoring the book exhibit and receptions with local wines.

After reports on past activities of the hosting network by FRANK HADLER (GWZO Leipzig and currently president of ENIUGH) and MATTHIAS MIDDELL (University of Leipzig, president of the Steering Committee of ENIUGH) main lectures were given by ANTHONY G. HOPKINS (Walter Prescott Webb Chair of History and Ideas at the Department of History, University of Texas at Austin) discussing the way „From Postmodernism to Globalisation“ and by BÉNÉDICTE SAVOY (Institute for History and Art's History at the Technical University Berlin) entitled „Es gibt nichts schöneres auf dem ganzen sublunaren Erdenrunde“. Die Kunstsammlungen Dresdens in transnationaler Perspektive“ introduced into the current deba-

te on globalisation and history from the perspective of a historian dealing above all with British imperial history and of a historian of arts, focusing on transnational entanglements in European fine arts history.¹

Hopkins took as point of the departure the somehow surprising fact that on the one hand mainstream historians often neglect the interpretation of current globalisation while on the other hand a new type of public intellectuals (often related to think tanks bypassing the traditional relationship between politics and universities) offers widely popular accounts with a geopolitical approach and focusing on the imperial past and the global present. He started then to survey the past 15 years or so of discussion on Empire and imperialism as central agents influencing or even building world orders. Hopkins' journey through the literature since the mid-1990s on globalisation, empire and history to which he contributed among others two substantial volumes, had for long a sceptical undertone concerning the chances to influence mainstream historiography and to overcome the status of outsiders' publications. He ended, however, with a much more positive statement in face of the respectable number of PhD-students presenting their projects at this conference. Bénédicte Savoy, having experienced herself the transfer from France to a German university, presented an entangled history of museums in Europe with a special focus on rich collections in Dresden, which became one of the points of attraction for participants during this conference weekend. She concentrated on circulations of artistic objects, ideas, people and representations; on interaction among those conceptualising new collections and their public presentation; as well as on compressions in time and space of representations in a digital age.

Statements during the opening session as well as in the majority of panels expressed satisfaction that global history becomes more and more a globally connected academic activity, with a strong foundation in the transatlantic cooperation but no longer restricted to it. This turns a debate in the North that was since the very beginning critical to all Eurocentric tradition into a dialogue between historians from the North and the South, it de-

opens the understanding of globalization not as a given objective but a bundle of political and socio-economic projects (some of them more powerful than others, of course) and it makes global history a polycentric or multipolar concept.

The common initiative of ENIUGH, WHA and the recently founded Asian-Pacific Organization of World Historians altogether with historians from Africa and Latin America to create the Network of World and Global History Organizations reflects on the one hand the globally connected character of an emerging discipline and on the other hand it demonstrates the emancipation of regional perspectives. This will help, one can expect, to overcome mistrust global history is often confronted with. Global history is neither a hegemonic project of American historians nor is it an English speaking discipline only. This is not to ignore the value and inspiration of all the books, journals, curricula and methodological proposals coming from the American academia, but the recent globalization of debates among global historians demonstrates the advantages of polyphonia. Transnational consortia offer now connected study programs around the world, and the foundation of a Global Studies Consortium this May in Tokyo is another element in this success story. It brings graduate programs from all over the world together and has global history defined as one of its pillars.

Such a (re-)definition of the field and its practices has huge methodological and theoretical consequences, but global historians only start to experience these consequences as an increasing number of conferences and curricula try to globalise global history. What will happen to the field and the traditions of a historiography that contributed in the past very actively to norm-setting in the respective countries when global history uses tools of polycentrism and multiperspectivism, is a rather open question, but one can expect an increasing awareness of transnational practices restructuring the profession of historians having been attached to the fate of the nation-

¹ The publication of these two introductory lectures altogether with the opening remarks of the conference organisers is under preparation and expected for the end of 2008.

state for so long. It might be one of the consequences of such an identification with specific professional features that differences to other forms of historiography much deeper rooted in the tradition of methodological nationalism will become more visible even in the future.

At the same time Global history becomes a consolidated and recognized field within the historical sciences, a fact that finds its expression both in the creation of chairs at universities and positions for researchers at extra-University research centres on the one hand and the creation of new associations dealing with standards and transnational cooperation within this field on the other hand. An element of this consolidation is an increasing internal differentiation between approaches like big, world, global, new global and transnational history. Obviously, these approaches don't exclude each other but cover different fields and help to understand the various aspects of global connectivity both in space and time. Much of the bitter debates between the pioneers of these concepts - coining new labels but pushing forward at the same time our understanding of methods and theories - have been replaced over the past five years by overviews balancing advantages and disadvantages of these concepts. Thus, it has developed a more complex understanding of what means global connectivity in Ancient times, around 1500, in the middle of the 19th century or after the shock of Hiroshima and the discovery of the ecological challenge.

The family of journals with the 'Journal of World History' and 'Comparativ' as now 20 or 18 years old members was joined recently (2006) by the 'Journal of Global History' based in London and a journal similarly named at Beijing. 'Mundus', an Italian journal, was just launched and special issues on global history of the 'Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine' in Paris, of 'Historia Social' in Barcelona, of 'Sozial.Geschichte' in Bremen and the 'Historisk Tidskrift' in Stockholm demonstrate further diversification.

Adding a few figures may complete the impression: geschichte.transnational, the e-forum of ENIUGH, has attracted within its four years of existence more than 4.000 subscribers, and authors from all parts of Europe as well as from overseas to contribute to a

very detailed picture of the field by reporting on conferences, by reviewing recent publications (more than 430 in four years) and announcements of upcoming workshops and conferences (531 so far). Of course such statistics are incomplete, but the figures demonstrate the growing importance of the services provided by the network. What one can conclude from these figures despite regional diversification is the increasing thematic diversity, which demonstrates that more and more departments, learned societies and funding agencies react to the need of globalizing topics. The term transnational history seem to work as an interface between traditional national or regional history writing and a global history approach.

Thirdly, Global history enters new interdisciplinary coalitions for attractive teaching programs as well as for exciting research agendas. It seems like historians start to find their position in a globalizing world and remain no longer in distance to the public discourse and the one dominating the social sciences, where globalization has become the key word for new narratives situating us in a changing world. To mention only a few activities that may be taken as proofing this progress: 'The Dictionary of Transnational history' for example, which is edited by Akira Iriye and Jean-Yves Saunier and will be published next year, shows the strength of the transatlantic cooperation and the growth of the community contributing to it. A 'Dictionary of Global Studies', edited by Mark Juergensmeyer and Helmut Anheier will follow. Recently a workshop at Cambridge University presented the Golden Web Foundation intended to develop more than 100 projects on connected histories for presentation in the web until 2011/12. Those looking for established and new book series have found their satisfaction at the book exhibit of the conference, but of course even this reflects only part of the whole. Global history seems to be in a boom time and the demand both from the book market and from the academic market seems not to be satisfied yet. PhD- and MA-students may look to these markets with hope and expectations.

Matthias Middell (Global and European Studies Institute at the University of Leipzig)

mentioned in his opening report furthermore some aspects of the congress theme that have structured the selection process for panels and papers: World orders are a recognized study object in political sciences, and very prominent in the study of international relations. If one looks to the contrary for items on World Orders in the history section of standard bibliographies, one may find only a few and rather marginal contributions. Have historians neglected so far the topic? At least they have not used so prominently the term. International Relations as a sub-discipline in political sciences has its corresponding sub-discipline in International History, recently renewed from its rather traditional origins in diplomatic history. But obviously World Order raises much more questions than repeating simply the story of the Holy Alliance or to deal with the Treaty of Tordesillas.

However, global governance challenged by the weight of the only remaining super power after 1989 has inspired also historians to revisit the category of empire, from Rome to Washington. Some have argued that there are lessons to be learned from the Victorian Empire, while others dispute the continuity to old fashioned European imperialism. Here, World Order is guaranteed by an ambitious great power (or a couple of such powers) controlling world affairs by military means and by political pressure based in economic superiority delivering the necessary resources. From a global historians point of view this raises questions like: What exactly is controlled when we speak of world affairs, what control means in terms of territoriality, in terms of routes for the main goods circulating globally or in terms of major resources like energy, raw materials, markets, financial institutions and so forth. It leads to the question since when in history it makes sense to speak of a world order: Or to formulate it differently: since when great powers dispose of the technology to control essential parts of world economy and since when world markets and world affairs have been more important than domestic markets and domestic affairs for the chances to develop societies?

A second inspiration comes from the hype the so called BRICs, the recently emerging economies of demographically and territorial-

ly important countries, have risen. The background for this debate is of course the question of a fair economic world order, the acknowledgment that large parts of the world's population have been excluded from major advantages of economic growth and that neither European superiority nor Western or American hegemony is unchallenged for ever. While to some extent this debate is about competition and the role of factors like demographic weight or access to essential raw materials vs. military and political power, it is at the same time a debate about institutions developing standards for the upcoming world order and serving as a platform for negotiations of sometimes clashing universals. The increasing awareness of problems like climate change, poverty, endemic and other mass diseases, dangerous regional conflicts expanding into global catastrophes etc inspire historians to focus more on the emergence of that awareness and its main representatives.

A third inspiration for the study of World Orders comes from the „war on terror“-paradigm that insists on the newness of a global constellation where classical warfare and its control by international law are no longer appropriate. One has not to agree with this perspective, and even a lot of governments do not, but what is interesting here for global historians is the focus on the asymmetry in conflicts between great or super powers and guerrillas or war-lords, some of them living from economies of violence. What clashes here are obviously not civilizations but different forms of spatial organizations of social formations. Research on World Order can't be restricted, as mainstream IR-people believe, to international conflicts and negotiations and to organisations acting at the global level, but it has to comprise what recently has been called the regimes of territoriality as its point of departure.

A fourth inspiration can be taken from the debate about trans- or multinational corporations, since some of them range nowadays among the richest units of analysis compared even to nation-states. The Harvard MNC-project has shown the power of these corporations in terms of capital and profit, but also in terms of employees controlled.² Loyalty

² See Chandler, Alfred D. jr.; Mazlish, Bruce (eds.), *Levia-*

no longer goes only with nation-states, but also with transnational companies. The first self-declared „world company“ (as the joint venture of Daimler-Chrysler-Mitsubishi presented itself at the time) failed, but this doesn't say that Multinational Corporations have no impact on World Order. Once we are speaking about economic power in this context we have to add the control over technology by means of standardization (the World Order of the meter or the kilogram, failing at the borders of the empire of inches and pound) as well as the whole topic of consumption and fashion: Are Hollywood and McDonald agents of a new World Order?

World Orders are probably nothing historians should only look for in the records of governments and CEOs. Since it seems to be at the same time a projection of domestic power and an attempt to realize it, both immediately challenged by those insisting on their local rules and by those attempting to compete for a different World Order, there is a fair chance that never a World Order has existed yet. World Orders are in this perspective pure phantasm, utopias, political projects, dreams of powerful people to become even more powerful or dreams of yet powerless people to introduce a better world of justice and peace. A history of World Orders can also be a history of those becoming victims of these dreams.

From these questions, some of them directly echoed by panels while others remained at the background of the general discussion of the congress, a rich debate emanated for three days of intensive work on which the following panel-reports will give a summary:

Session „Critical Junctures of Globalisation“ (Mandy Kretzschmar)

Session „Cultural and Political History of International Organizations“ (Isabella Löhr)

Session „Economic and Political World Orders“ (Maria Hidvegi)

Session „Global Governance“ (Eike Karin Ohlendorf)

Session „Global Moments and World Orders“ (Torsten Loschke)

Session „Historiography I“ (Kerstin Lange)

Session „Historiography II“ (Katja Naumann)

Session „Mobility, Diasporas and Territorial Orders“ (Barbara Lüthi und Mathias Mesen-

höller)

Session „Premodern History“ (Deborah Gerstenberger)

Session „Regions Compared“ (Irida Vorpsi)

At the end of the conference a round table with PEER VRIES (Vienne), PATRICK O'BRIEN (London), BARBARA LÜTHI (Basel), KATJA NAUMANN (Leipzig) and moderated by MADELEINE HERREN (Heidelberg) tried to bring together some of the issues having been central to discussion during the conference. While the podium focused on the relationship between world and global historical approaches and on the question whether the glass is half empty or half filled when it comes to chances for further progress in the field, questions from the audience concerned language policy among Europeans dealing with global issues and the relationship between academic discourse and politics which becomes prominent when historiography regains public attention while addressing globalisation in its historical forms and its actuality.

The closing event was introduced by two dinner talks, one given by MARCEL VAN DER LINDEN (Research Director at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam) on new tendencies in labour history going consequently global since a couple of years, and the other given by the new president-elect of the Steering Committee, GARETH AUSTIN (Senior Lecturer in the Global Economic History Department of the London School of Economics and Political Science), announcing next conferences venue in London. This conference will be held in April 2011 in a city well-known for its academic institutions focussing on the global reach not only of an empire but also of a world-wide economic network. Austin announced at the same time that ENIUGH will try to attract more scholars from those countries not yet represented in its conferences and it will actively contribute to the success of world-wide collaboration among global historians.

Annotations:

Tagungsbericht *Second ENIUGH-Congress: Introductory Remarks*. 03.07.2008–05.07.2008,

thans. Multinational Corporations and the New Global History, Cambridge/ Mass 2005.

Dresden, in: H-Soz-Kult 24.10.2008.