Second ENIUGH-Congress: Session „Regions Compared“

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Bericht von: Irida Vorpsi, Leipzig

In the following you find a report on the session „Premodern History“ of the Second European Congress on World and Global History. The general aim and structure of the congress are described at: <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=2309>

Session: „Regions Compared“
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This session consisted of four panels. In the first panel, „Nationalism and Subimperialism in world regions“ the central topic discussed was the discursive element related to „Europe“ and „European Civilization“ in regard to countries in which the concept is either rejected or where it is taken for granted that it doesn't apply. The first panelist, MAHUA SAKAR (Binghamton), presented a paper focusing on the rise of fundamentalism among the Hindu in India. She introduced to the dominant discourse that sees Hindu Fundamentalism as marginal, as an mistake, an instance of history. However in the early 1990s the Hindu violence against Muslims took a vivid path. This was taken as the starting point for making out earlier traditions of violence and violent resistance by Hindus.
The second panelist, JOZSEF BOROCZ (New Jersey) presented a paper on „Eastern Europe on the (Post-?)Colonial and (post-?) Imperial Map“. He was focusing on the system of representation showing the difference between 'West European' and 'Non-West European'; the one of white people versus others. The key point of his paper was to demonstrate how Eastern Europe is from the other side by pointing at the used language to externalize the other. The third panelist and also the chair of this panel was ATILLA MELEGH (Budapest) giving a paper on population policies and imperialism, as well nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th century in a global perspective.

The second panel turned to the history of the Indian Ocean focusing on piracy and the European colonial expansion, discussing experiences as well as structures of maritime violence in different parts of the Ocean in an historical perspective. PATRICIA RISSO (Albuquerque) started with a definition of piracy as a indiscriminate seizure of sea borne or coastal property under the threat or use of force that extends to taking captives. Furthermore she emphasized the importance of race, ethnicity, identity and representation of the other in exploring piracy starting with Concentrating on the early modern period she compered piracy in the Indian and Atlantic ocean, pointing at the differences of power structures and trading patterns which clarily had an effect in the forms of piracy. SEBASTIAN PRANGE (London) pointed out that although piracy is commonly described as unorganized and disconnected from mainland societies, political structures are at the core of piracy and thus connects it with the nature of the pre modern state. PIUS MALEKANDATHIL (Delhi) talked about the pirates of Malabar during the Age of the of European Commercial Expansion (1500 -1800). The paper was focused on the examination of the nature of the piracy and the various aspects of the criminality that were present in South West India. He also analyzed the different mechanisms that enabled pirates to obtain legitimacy as well also the sanctions applied for their upward mobility in social economic and political ladder. This last panelist, Giancarlo Casale (Rochester) presenting on paper „The Ethnic Composition of the Ottoman Ship crews and the „Rumi Challenge“ to the Portuguese Identity. The implications of the special Portuguese awareness of the multi –ethnic nature of the Ottoman Identity was explored, as were the role of the different ethnic groups within the pirate crews.

The third panel was on „Asianism: Global Power Structures, transnational cooperation and the politics of Identity in the 20th century“, also chaired by the DIETMAR ROTHERMUND (Heidelberg). It analyzed various processes of inventing Asia. HARALD FISCHER-TINE (Bremen) presented a paper on Indian visions of Asia between nationalism and internationalism, addressing motives and results of the Indian appropriation of the Asia concept and explaining how Asian internationalism interacted with nationalist dis-

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courses in modern India. MATHIAS ZACHMANN (Munich) talked about legal prosperency and described how Japanese international lawyers managed the intellectual transition from Greater East Asia to a postwar World Government, 1944-1951". SEBASTIAN CONRAD (Florence) also turned to Japan, particularly in issues of history and memory in Post-Cold-War Japan. He gave a broad overview on how Japan was trying to redefine its position within Asia – after the WWII. From1945 to the 1990s the dominant historical narrative in Japan was oriented towards heroic elements of the own national history including a strong emphasis on the victimization of the people. Interesting after the1990s, things changed and „Asia" assumed inerrably relevance in Japan. This can only be explained by reference to global processes, among others the disappearance of the East-West-divide.

The last panel („State and Nation Formation in the early era- China and Britain Compared" discussed the origins of the economic divergence between Asia and Europe based upon an book manuscript by PEER VRIES (Vienna). Vries started with a short outline of his overall argument, namely that the differences in economics between China and Britain in the course of the development from the 18th century onwards can be explained by looking at the very different political structures in each of the two countries. PATRICK O'BRIEN (London), HANS-HEINRICH NOLTE (Barsinghausen), JOHN DARWIN (Oxford) and KENT DENG (London) commented critically on the argument from various perspectives, opening up a very lively and thought-provoking discussion.

Program of the Session

Nationalism and sub-imperialism. World Regions compared, chair: Attila Melegh, Budapest
with papers by Mahua Sarkar and Jozsef Böröcz

Piracy in the Indian Ocean, chair: Dietmar Rothermund, Heidelberg,
with papers by Sebastian Prange, Patricia Risso, Giancarlo Casale, Pius Malekndathil

Asianisms: Global Power Structures, Transnational Cooperation, chair: Harald Fischer – Tiné, Bremen
Urs Mathias Zachmann: „Legal Transference: How Japanese international lawyers managed the intellectual transition from Greater East Asia to a postwar World Government, 1944-1951"
Harald Fischer-Tiné: „Indian visions of Asia between nationalism and internationalism (c. 1910-1950)"
Nicola Spakowski: " 'East Asian' pasts – transnational efforts at (re)constructing a region and its history"
Sebastian Conrad: „The Return of Asia. History and Memory in Post-Cold War Japan"

State and Nation-Formation in the Early Modern Era - China and Britain Compared, chair: Michael Mann, Hagen
with papers by Peer Vries, Patrick O'Brien, Hans-Heinrich Nolte, Kent Deng, John Darwin

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