

History, Memory and European Identity

Veranstalter: History of European Integration Research Society (HEIRS)

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Over sixty scholars from thirteen different countries, different disciplines (History, Political Science, Sociology, Film Studies, Philosophy) and generations gathered from 5-6 June 2014 for the 10th annual conference of the History of European Integration Research Society (HEIRS). It took place at Maastricht University and was organized by Aline Sierp (Maastricht) and Eugen Pfister (Vienna). The conference's aim was to contribute to current debates on cultural and political memory and identity in Europe by investigating the efforts made by different political and social actors since the 1950s aimed at generating a sense of belonging to the European Union. Main questions addressed during the conference were: What did early attempts of fostering a common European memory look like? Who were the actors and agents involved in this process? What is the connection between a collective European identity and a common memory? Is a common memory and identity dependent on the actions of classical political actors? Which elements of European history have been harnessed in order to provide a basis for a collective identity? Through the investigation of those questions, the conference aimed not only at strengthening historical perspectives in on-going academic debates, but also at encouraging interdisciplinary approaches and widening the scope of current deliberations on memory and identity.

After a short welcome note by the organizers, the conference started with two parallel panels. A first panel on „Memories of Human Rights Violations“ chaired by KIRAN PATEL (Maastricht University), focused on the role of historical acts of mass violence in the construction of a collective European memory. KATJA WEZEL (University of Pittsburgh) presented her research on the „European Day of Remembrance of Vic-

tims of Stalinism and Nazism“, juxtaposing the experience of the Soviet oppression to the Nazi regime. Wezel presented Eastern European perceptions and the struggle to incorporate these in common European memory politics. She was followed by SONJA DINTER (Kassel University), who spoke on the (often forgotten) remembrance of colonial slavery in Europe between national, transatlantic and European realms of memory. GREGOR FEINDT (Leibniz Institute for European History, Mainz) presented the work of a recently finished joint book on the remembrance of mass violence and Europe's self-perceived role as an arbitrator of this debate. He suggested that the discourse on European memory eventually reproduces expectations that stem from the culturally homogenising effects of national remembrance.

At the same time a second panel on „Memory, Identity and Culture“ took place, chaired by WOLFRAM KAISER (University of Portsmouth). This panel assembled academic perspectives on identity from three different disciplines (Sociology, Film Studies and History). A sociological approach was represented by KARINA OBORUNE (University of Latvia) who presented her quantitative research on the Erasmus-programme and its impact on the self-perception of students as Europeans, followed by a film studies approach on European identity given by JAAP VERHEUL (Utrecht University). He used the European coproduction „Merry Christmas“ to exemplify European film policy and the „Euro pudding“- way of constructing a European identity in films. The panel then was concluded by MONICA-IOANA BALAN (University of Bucharest) who searched in the Romanian Interwar-Journal „Idée Europeana“ for an intellectual Romanian discourse on the idea of Europe.

The first day of the conference was concluded by a presentation of the European advertising film „Adventure Europe“ (Director: Philippe Brunet, France 1955/56) produced on behalf of the Council of Europe and with the aim to propagate a common cultural European identity. The 60-minutes film was introduced by ANNE BRUCH (Hamburg University), member of the DFG research project „Werben für Europa. Die mediale Konstruk-

tion europäischer Identität durch Filme im Rahmen europäischer Öffentlichkeitsarbeit“.

The second conference day was opened by a keynote speech by HEIDEMARIE UHL (Austrian Academy of Sciences) who gave a comprehensive overview of academic debates and discourses on the concept of „collective memory“, on its use and abuse.

In a first panel on „European Memory“, chaired by ORIANE CALLIGARO (Maastricht University), PHILIPPE PERCHOC (Université Catholique de Louvain) presented his paper on „Remembering the First World War from below“. He was followed by SAM VAN DEN EIJNDEN (Euroclio/Erasmus University Rotterdam) who took a different approach to the commemoration of the World War I centennial by studying the European Union's „official“ approach. INNA SIUTKINA (Udmurt State University) finally spoke on the evolution from a national to a European memory through dialogical remembering. She dealt with the question of how to combine national memories into a European memory but at the same time avoid inducing conflict about which parts of history are to be believed and remembered.

The panel on „Identity Constructions in Post-War Europe“, chaired by SEBASTIAN BÜTTNER (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg) assembled three papers on the construction of a European identity from World War I up to the immediate postwar period. The first being QUINCY R. CLOET (College of Europe, Natolin) who attempted a tour de force of all the paneuropean intellectual debates on European identity in the interwar period, followed by MATIAS GARDIN (University of Luxembourg) who tried to prove the similarity between the nation-building process in Luxembourg during World War I and the search for a European identity in the postwar period. MATHIAS SCHÜTZ (Hamburg University) concentrated on debates concerning the „German Problem“ in the different European Movements between 1946 and 1952 and assessed the importance of this topic in the construction of a common European identity.

The afternoon sessions were introduced by a keynote speech by PAVEL TYCHTEL (European Commission) who gave an interesting

insight into the Remembrance Action of the „Europe for Citizens“ programme and the remembrance activities organised by the Commission.

OLIVER PLESSOW (Kassel University) chaired a panel on „Memories of Expulsion and Deportation“. ALFONS ARAGONESES (University Pompeu Fabra of Barcelona) reported on the almost unknown deportation of Spaniards to the Nazi camps and the lack of a European antifascist memory in Spain. He was followed by STEVEN B. DAVIS (Texas A&M University), who talked about his research on German expellees and the Czech Underground, and examined the changing discourses on the post-World War II expulsion of Sudeten Germans from 1970 through 1989. MARKUS STADTRECHER (Augsburg University) finally spoke of the „Ackermann-Gemeinde“, an association of Catholics originating from the German-speaking population of Eastern Europe and argued that they – contrary to most expectations – helped to advance the process of creating a European identity.

ELEONORA NARVSELIUS (Lund University) chaired a parallel panel on „Heritage and Identity“ which focused on cultural artefacts used for the construction of a European identity, like the creation of a European „Capital of Culture“, as presented by HELI MEISTERSOHN (Leipzig University), who concentrated on the example of Tallinn in 2011. She was followed by ELSA DUVAL (Leibniz Institute for European History, Mainz) who put the Aachen Cathedral Site and the beginnings of the UNESCO World Heritage List in perspective of the construction of a „European cultural heritage“. The panel was concluded by TIMO SAALMANN (Bamberg) who emphasized the transnational aspect of „European rivers“ on the basis of international exhibitions on the rivers Rhine, Danube and Elbe.

One of the two concluding panels, chaired by CHRISTIAN SALM (University of Portsmouth) focused on the dichotomy between nationalism and Europeanism, exemplified by a presentation from EMILIAN COLCERU-MIHUL (University of Bucharest) who analyzed the history curriculum of Romanian schools for a shift from a national to a European history. He was followed by

HANCO JÜRGENS (Duitslandinstituut Amsterdam) who examined the „Social Market Economy and the Poldermodel“ from this perspective, focusing on national competences, transnational debates and European responsibilities.

AMANDA KLUVELD (Maastricht University) chaired simultaneously the final panel on „Memory, Identity and Religion“. URSZULA PEKALA (Leibniz Institute for European History, Mainz) concentrated on the reconciliation debates inside the Catholic Church in Germany, France and Poland after the Second World War and its impact on the construction of a European identity, followed by ANYA TOPOLSKI (University of Leuven) who criticized the construction of a common Judeo-Christian signifier, and searched for the political stakes in relation to European identity-formation of the signifier 'Judeo-Christian' in European discourse.

In conclusion, over 60 scholars discussed in eight different panels how the European Union deals with memories of Human Rights violations, to what extent a Europeanisation of heritage and identity issues can be observed in different European countries, what identity constructions in post-war Europe looked like and what role religion plays in contemporary tales of European unity. By bringing together a popular intellectual debate on European identity (which mostly takes place in the feuillets of renowned newspapers), a political debate (which takes place in the European institutions itself) and the existing academic debate, the conference provided a captivating examination of contemporary and antecedent discourses on a common European identity and memory from a historical perspective. It thus enabled an extremely rich international and interdisciplinary exchange of ideas that will certainly continue well beyond the actual conference meeting.

Conference Overview:

Panel 1: Memories of Human Rights Violations

Discussant: Kiran Patel (Maastricht University)

Katja Wezel (University of Pittsburgh), The European Day of Remembrance of Victims

of Stalinism and Nazism – Eastern European Perceptions and the Quest for a Common European Memory Politics

Sonja Dinter (Kassel University), The remembrance of colonial slavery: Between national, transatlantic and European realms of memory
Gregor Feindt (Leibniz Institute for European History, Mainz), Towards Impartial Memory? Europe as Arbitrator in Remembering Mass Violence

Panel 2: Memory, Identity and Culture

Discussant: Wolfram Kaiser (University of Portsmouth)

Karina Oborune (University of Latvia), Becoming more EUropean or European after ERASMUS?

Jaap Verheul (New York University), Merry Christmas: European Film Policy and the Politics of Remembering the First World War
Monica-Ioana Balan (University of Bucharest), Between Orient and Occident: Romania's Endeavour to Assert its European Identity as Portrayed in the Journal „Ideea Europeană“ („The European Idea“), 1919-1928

Movie Presentation: „Adventure Europe“

introduced by Anne Bruch (Universität Hamburg)

Keynote Lecture

by Heidemarie Uhl (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften)

Chair: Eugen Pfister (Vienna University)

Panel 3: A European Memory?

Discussant: Oriane Calligaro (Maastricht University)

Philippe Perchoc, (Université Catholique de Louvain), Remembering the First World War. Europeanization from below

Sam van den Eijnden (Euroclio/Erasmus University Rotterdam), Commemorating 'the European Civil War'. A study of the way the European Union marks the centenary of the First World War (1914-1918)

Inna Siutkina (Udmurt State University), From a national to a European memory through the dialogical remembering

Panel 4: Identity Constructions in Post-War Europe

Discussant: Sebastian Büttner (University of

Erlangen-Nürnberg)

Quincy R. Cloet (College of Europe, Natolin), Mapping the Interwar European Debate: The European Movement and the Shape of a Common Identity (1918-1939)

Matias Gardin (University of Luxembourg), Patriotism contained: reflections on European identity, education and citizenship in Luxembourg from 1914 to 1918

Mathias Schütz (Hamburg University), Preparing Memory: European Unification Movements and the „German Problem“, 1946–1952

Keynote Lecture

by Pavel Tychtl (European Commission)

Chair: Aline Sierp (Maastricht University)

Panel 5: Memories of Expulsion and Deportation

Discussant: Oliver Plessow (Kassel University)

Alfons Aragoneses (University Pompeu Fabra of Barcelona), The hiding of the deportation of Spaniards to the Nazi camps and the lack of a European antifascist memory in Spain

Steven B. Davis (Oldenburg University), Tales of Expulsion in Middle Europe: Expellees, the Czech Underground and the Rewriting of Expulsion Morality, 1970-1989

Markus Stadtrecher (Augsburg University), Fighting for Europe – Fighting for „Heimat“

Panel 6: Heritage and Identity

Discussant: Eleonora Narvselius (Lund University)

Heli Meistersohn (Leipzig University), European Capitals of Culture and the Trouble with their „European Dimension“. The Case of the „Stories of the Seashore“ of Tallinn 2011

Elsa Duval (Leibniz Institute for European History, Mainz), Constructing a European Heritage in a Global World? The Aachen Cathedral Site and the beginnings of the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Timo Saalmann (Bamberg), European Rivers. Exhibitions and identity modeling since the 1990s

Panel 7: Nationalism vs Europeanism

Discussant: Christian Salm (University of Portsmouth)

Emilian Colceru-Mihul (University of

Bucharest), From National to European History in Romanian Schools

Hanco Jürgens (Duitslandinstituut Amsterdam), The Social Market Economy and the Poldermodel: national competences, transnational debates and European responsibilities.

Panel 8: Memory, Identity and Religion

Discussant: Amanda Kluvel (Maastricht University)

Urszula Pekala (Leibniz Institute for European History, Mainz), The Impact of Identity and Memory on the Reconciliation after the Second World War as exemplified by Catholic Church in Germany, France and Poland

Anya Topolski (University of Leuven), A Genealogy of the 'Judeo-Christian' Signifier: A Tale of Europe's identity Crisis

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