

**Seit 1918... Staatsentstehung, Monarchienzerfall und Revolutionserfahrung im Rückspiegel nationaler Jubiläen**

**Veranstalter:** Deutsch-Tschechische und Deutsch-Slowakische Historikerkommission; Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau; Botschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Warschau; Botschaft der Slowakischen Republik, Warschau; Botschaft der Tschechischen Republik, Warschau; Slowakisches Institut Warschau; Tschechisches Zentrum Warschau; Collegium Carolinum, München

**Datum, Ort:** 11.10.2018–13.10.2018, Warschau

**Bericht von:** Andrea Talabér, Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

The annual conference of the German-Czech and the German-Slovak Historical Associations focused on the commemorations and celebrations of (post-)1918 key and watershed dates in the history of Central and Eastern Europe. The presentations dealt with various commemorations in countries within the purview of the Associations, however, presentations that focused on other countries such as Poland, the Baltic states, Austria and Hungary were also invited, thus providing fertile ground for discussions from a wider regional standpoint.

The main aim of the conference was to bring together scholars focusing on various aspects of commemorative practices and to provide a long-term perspective on the commemorations in the region, with a special focus on the decadal anniversaries of 1918 such as 1928, 1938 and 1988. Importantly, these dates also represented dates just before dramatic political, cultural and social changes in the region's history. Of central interest to the conference was the interaction between the history of the state, politics, public discourses of history and the different interpretations of commemorations and celebrations.

The majority of the papers presented at the conference investigated commemorations during the interwar period, examining state foundations, independence and various aspects connected to the foundation of these new states. MACIEJ GÓRNY (Warsaw) of-

fered a comparative (and transnational) perspective on the different fates and treatments of veteran combatants in the new states of (mainly) Czechoslovakia and Poland. GÓRNY argued that the status of the war veterans within their post-independence societies depended on their precise roles in World War I (for example, whether had they fought as legionnaires or in the imperial army), an issue that was also crucial from an official commemorative perspective.

MARCIN JARZĄBEK (Cracow) focused on the Czechoslovak legionaries and on the year 1938. He argued that following the Munich Agreement Czechoslovak legionaries had to reformulate their discourse of self-confidence and national importance to show national unity in the face of adversity. Jarzabek argued that whilst the new discourse could not take root since after the occupation of Czechoslovakia the associations of the legionnaires were closed down, the change allows us to examine the flexibility of their discourse.

The papers focusing on state foundations highlighted the rituals, challenges and conflicts faced by the states in organizing official commemorations and celebrations during the interwar period. NINA LOHMANN and JIŘÍ PEŠEK (both Prague) discussed the tenth anniversary commemorations in 1928 of the establishment of the First Czechoslovak Republic. They highlighted the de-Austrianization efforts of the governing elite and the focus on the democratic traditions of the new republic. For the tenth anniversary a large-scale urban development plan was also put in place to turn Prague into a world city, which included various building works (for example the Troja bridge in Libeň), city lighting, the construction of various monuments (to František Palacký, Ernest Denis and the fallen soldiers of World War I, for example). MILOSLAV SZABO (Bratislava) highlighted the complicated relationship of the state foundation day of Czechoslovakia in the Slovak half of the republic, while also examining attitudes towards ethnic and religious minorities such as the Roma, Jews and Hungarians.

The anniversary commemorations of the founding of the state in Poland were explored by CHRISTHARDT HENSCHEL, ANNA NOWAKOWSKA-WIERZCHOŚ (both War-

---

saw) and IWONA DADEJ (Warsaw / Berlin). Henschel elaborated on the Jewish views of Polish independence commemorations and argued that despite discrimination against Jews in Poland, they were present and represented, and Polish-Jewish commemorations of the foundation were harmonious. Dadej and Nowakowska-Wierchoś presented a new research project they are embarking on, which aims to explore women's role during World War I and how and by whom this was presented to the public, particularly in the case of the 1928 commemorations.

A number of presentations focused on the long-term processes of commemorations, either by examining these cultural forms over a *longue durée*-perspective or by examining these commemorative days on later anniversaries. ROMAN HOLEC (Bratislava) examined the Czechoslovak foundation day (28 October) commemorations from a Slovak perspective, zooming in on decadal anniversary commemorations in 1928, 1938 and 1948. Holec highlighted the ambivalent relationship of the Slovaks to the date of October 28th – Slovak politicians argued for October 30th as the foundation of state day celebrations, the day the Martin Declaration was signed and the day when Slovakia officially joined – and also discussed preparations for the commemorations in Slovakia. FRANK HADLER (Leipzig) offered a perspective on the writing and rewriting of history during the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia, especially in the 1980s. ANDREA TALABÉR (Prague) also offered a *longue durée* perspective on the Hungarian state foundation day and on its founder St./King Stephen. She highlighted that established traditions can often survive dramatic regime changes that often have opposing ideological outlooks by focusing on the commemorations on August 20th in 1938 and 1988, under the regime of the conservative-nationalist Horthy and the Communist regimes.

The papers presented at the conference highlighted how commemorative events, especially those that deal with state foundations, offer countries an opportunity to present their values, while at the same time these days present opportunities for dissent and conflict. Commemorations and national

days also offer historians the opportunity – as demonstrated by the presentations – to problematize the narrative structures of how history is presented and to examine the relationship between communicative and cultural memory. The general discussion at the end of the conference suggested new avenues for research and highlighted issues that could be further explored: for example, how do these events legitimize the current regime? How are these events organized (who sat on these committees, who financed them and the commemorations)? And – perhaps most pertinently for the conference – what is the role of historians in not only the organization and staging of these commemorations, but also in providing the historical narrative that structures and 'authenticates' them?

#### **Konferenzübersicht:**

##### *Podiumsdiskussion*

„Erste Republik“, „Zweite Republik“, „Weimarer Republik“ und „der Staat, den keiner wollte“ – Parallele Anfänge 1918 in der Mitte Europas mit diversen Ausgängen.

Moderation: Jana Osterkamp (München) / Roman Holec (Bratislava) / Frank Hadler (Leipzig) / Andrii Portnov (Frankfurt an der Oder) / Miloš Řezník (Warschau)

##### *Filmvorführung*

*Grosses Zerstören* (1918) aus dem Zyklus *Tschechische Jahrhundert*.

Regie: R. Sedláček

##### *Eröffnung der Tagung*

Maciej Górny / Miloš Řezník (beide Warschau) / Frank Hadler (Leipzig): Einführung in das Tagungsthema

Maciej Górny (Warschau): Parallele Erinnerungskulturen an den Ersten Weltkrieg und die Unabhängigkeitskriege in Ostmitteleuropa 1918–1939

Marcin Jarzabek (Krakau): Czechoslovak Legionnaires in 1938 and Their Rituals of National Consolidation, or from the Children to the Orphans of the Republic

Piotr T. Kwiatkowski (Warschau): Die Herausbildung von Mustern zur Feier historischer Jahrestage in Polen

Nina Lohmann / Jiří Pešek (beide Prag):

Die Prager Feierlichkeiten zur Gründung der Tschechoslowakei 1928: Zwischen einer Erinnerung an die historische Realität und einem Dekolonialisierungsmythos

Miloslav Szabo (Bratislava): Repräsentationen der „Wende“ von 1918 anlässlich des 10. Jahrestages der Gründung der RČS

Christhardt Henschel (Warschau): Waffenbrüder auf Distanz. Jüdische Sichtweisen auf die polnische Unabhängigkeit (1928 und 1938)

Iwona Dadej (Berlin / Warschau) / Anna Nowakowska-Wierzchoś (Warschau): „Umkämpfte Erinnerung“. Wie und von wem wurde die Teilnahme von Polinnen am Ersten Weltkrieg in der Öffentlichkeit und auf der Jubiläumsfeier 1928 präsentiert?

Roman Holec (Bratislava): Rituale der Republik 1928 – 1938 – 1948

*Geschlossene Arbeitssitzungen der Kommissionssektionen*

Hildegard Schmoller (Wien): Nichts zu feiern?! – Der „12. November“ in Österreich

Andrea Talabér (Prag): The Saint and the King: The National Day of St. Stephen in Hungary in 1938 and 1988

Frank Hadler (Leipzig): Im Schatten von 70 Jahren „Roter Oktober“ und Perestroika

Arūnas Vyšniauskas (Vilnius): Zur Problematik der baltischen Staatsgeburten vor 100 Jahren. Ein Vergleich der Monografien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der baltischen Staaten von Gregor Rutenberg (1928), Stanley W. Page (1959) und Sigmar Stopinski (1997)

*Abschlussdiskussion*

*Geschlossene Arbeitssitzung der Deutsch-Tschechischen und Deutsch-Slowakischen Historikerkommission*

Tagungsbericht *Seit 1918... Staatsentstehung, Monarchienzerfall und Revolutionserfahrung im Rückspiegel nationaler Jubiläen*. 11.10.2018–13.10.2018, Warschau, in: H-Soz-Kult 18.04.2019.