

# Theme four: Democratic Rights on the Global Stage 1870-1970.

## Participants and abstracts.

### Theme coordinator:

Dr. Anne-Isabelle Richard (Leiden University)

[a.i.richard@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:a.i.richard@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

### Participants:

1. 'Political Participation beyond Nation, Parliament and Party: Transnationalising "Functional Democracy" in Interwar Europe', Stefan Couperus, University of Groningen.
2. "'India cannot stand aloof!': Exploring the entangled web of Indian anti-fascism, anti-colonialism and humanitarian solidarity in the interwar period', Maria Framke, Rostock University.
3. 'Turning to the United Nations when Their Nation Failed Them: African American Women and the Post-War Struggle for Human Rights', Julie Gallagher, Penn State University.
4. 'The dream of the Wise or a Gospel of Despair? The World Parliament Movement, 1945-1960s', Daniel Gorman, University of Waterloo.
5. 'From the international to the national and back: negotiating ideas of the anti-Imperial nation in Central Asia in the Cold War', Hanna Jansen, University of Amsterdam.
6. 'Between National and Transnational Setting: the Anti-apartheid Movement in France (1960-1974)', Anna Konieczna, Science Po Centre d'histoire.
7. 'The League of Nations and National Minorities: the Case of South Tyrol', Nathan Marcus, European University Institute.
8. "", Ali Raza, Zentrum Moderner Orient.
9. 'From Delhi to Cairo. Mobilising anti-imperialist activists across 1950s Afro-Asia', Carolien Stolte, Leiden University.
10. "", Anne-Isabelle Richard, Leiden University.

### Introduction

Democratic rights are often conceived of, and have developed, in national frameworks. However, not all groups within the nation state have always felt they could stake their claims sufficiently on the national stage. In order to make their claims heard and increase their legitimacy they appealed to the

international stage, a phenomenon that Keck and Sikkink call the boomerang effect. This workshop aims to contribute to this literature by investigating the connections between scales of mobilisation.

The groups involved tended to be those marginalised in society, such as workers, women, immigrants or groups that were not even perceived to be part of society such as colonial subjects. They were not the only ones to connect these scales of mobilisation however. Other, often more privileged, activists conceived of national democracy as part of international democracy and thus lobbied to connect the two. In taking an inclusive approach and including papers on all these groups, this workshop aims to examine how claims to democracy on the international as well as the national level involved processes of in- and exclusion.

The international fora targeted included both more formal venues such as international organisations, but also more informal platforms such as diasporic groups and transnational (social) movements. By bringing together papers covering a range of platforms this workshop aims to start a conversation on the connections between these trans- and international platforms.

This workshop invites papers that explore the use of the international sphere as an alternative and/or additional venue to the national level to claim democratic rights between 1870 and 1970. We are particularly interested in contributions that examine the connections between different scales of mobilisation (local, national, colonial, trans- and international) and between different regions across the globe.

## Abstracts

**Couperus, Stefan**

[s.couperus@rug.nl](mailto:s.couperus@rug.nl)

### ***Political Participation beyond Nation, Parliament and Party: Transnationalising “Functional Democracy” in Interwar Europe***

Building upon the non-Jacobinist readings of French democracy by Pierre Rosanvallon and Alain Chatriot, recent historical scholarship has stressed the emergence of practices of political representation and democratic governance in a host of European countries. Parallel to the trajectories of parliamentarism, expanding suffrage and representative government, a process of ‘re-corporatisation’ provoked myriad ideas and institutional experiments with ‘functional democracy’ and extra-parliamentary political representation of socio-economic interests and expertise from the late 19th century onwards. After the end of the Great War these experiments amounted to labourious national projects of installing representative bodies comprising socio-economic interest groups and experts, such as the Vorläufige Reichswirtschaftsrat (1919) in Weimar Germany and the Conseil national économique (1924) in France. Key to these national projects was the definition of the ‘functional demos’, i.e. the criteria which made individuals and/or collectives eligible for political participation in these extra-parliamentary circuits of democratic politics.

What has been largely overlooked in the literature on national instances of industrial democracy or (neo)corporatism in the period 1870-1940 is the inter- and transnational dimension that, too, fostered intellectual debates and institutional experimentation. By the end of the 1920s, a number of intellectuals and administrators forwarded extra-parliamentary, representative bodies as the building blocks of a new mode of transnational collaboration based on vocations, economic interests and trades rather than on nation-states or political ideologies. This paper analyses some of the key discourses about this transnational conception of ‘functional democracy’ in Europe during the interwar

period. As such, it presents a historical narrative about the emergence of (neo)corporatism as a mode extra-parliamentary democratic governance that stretches beyond the framework of the nation-state and parliamentary politics. Moreover, this paper will forward historical conceptions of democratic citizenship that were not exclusively informed by universal claims on individual political rights or electoral reforms.

**Framke, Maria** (Rostock University)

[maria.framke@uni-rostock.de](mailto:maria.framke@uni-rostock.de)

***"India cannot stand aloof!": Exploring the Entangled web of Indian Anti-Fascism, Anti-Colonialism and Humanitarian Solidarity in the Interwar Period***

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**Gallagher, Julie** (Penn State University)

[jag63@psu.edu](mailto:jag63@psu.edu)

***Turning to the United Nations When their Nation Failed Them: African American Women and the Postwar Struggle for Human Rights***

In May 1945 Mary McLeod Bethune, founder and president of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), wrote to Council members from San Francisco where she was attending the landmark conference called to establish the United Nations. When, in the course of her lengthy and informative letter Bethune remarked that, "I have been wonderfully received as the only Negro woman consultant to the International Conference," she spoke volumes about the way the international community and the United States valued women of color in planning the post-war world. The reality behind the comment, that the world's leaders did not think these women's voices mattered, served as the basis for one of the NCNW's most significant goals in the post-war era. They endeavored through a variety of approaches to ensure that African American women and women of color from around the world, especially those living under the yoke of colonial oppression, had a say in shaping the new world order and had an opportunity to experience the full flowering of human rights that had been promised in the United Nations Charter. The NCNW, founded just ten years earlier to advocate for African American women's economic and social concerns within the United States, was now determined to serve an integral role in building a new global order grounded in the principles of economic and social justice, racial and gender equality, and respect for human rights. This paper examines how the NCNW's leaders did this by advocating for black women's inclusion, and where appropriate, leadership in discussions about peace and justice taking place in international women's organizations and the United Nations. Their accomplishments and their failures tell us about the kinds of changes that were and were not possible through the United Nations in the postwar era; and how race, gender and the structure of the international body itself shaped outcomes.

**Gorman, Daniel** (University of Waterloo)

[dpgorman@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:dpgorman@uwaterloo.ca)

### ***The Dream of the Wise or a Gospel of Despair? The World Parliament Movement, 1945-1960s***

The emergence of international governance at the end of the Second World War was dominated by considerations of collective security and national sovereignty. As the immediate post-war crisis years passed, however, many internationalists questioned whether democratic rights were adequately provided for in the new international system. One arena where some internationalists looked for means of fostering greater legitimacy in international governance was parliamentary democracy. My proposed workshop paper concerns the World Association of Parliamentarians for World Government (WAPWG). The WAPWG supported four core concepts: the creation of a world parliament, the implementation of world law, an expanded role for world courts, and a world police force. The world parliament movement was spearheaded by a cross-party group of British parliamentarians with an interest in international cooperation. Leading figures included the Liberal politician Clement Davies, former Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee, Labour activist Gilbert McAllister, and John Boyd Orr, first Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. At its peak in the mid-1950s, the WAPWG had close to five hundred individual members from over thirty member countries.

Like many internationalists after 1945, world parliamentarians perceived war, poverty, ignorance, and disease as the world's primary problems. To address these global challenges, the WAPWG proposed the formation of a supranational authority with legislative, judicial, and executive functions, control of international police and armed forces, and the central management of international disarmament. Such a deliberative institution would be legitimate in the sense that it would be representative of people around the world, while respecting national governments' autonomy over those domestic issues which did not touch on questions of international peace and security. Members prepared a constitution for a world government, worked to make the UN Charter more democratic, advocated for regional federations, and lobbied for the creation of a world development authority.

An analysis of the WAPWG addresses several of the workshop's themes. Members operated on integrated national and international scales. They lobbied their own governments to support world government, built a transnational network amongst themselves, and brought their case directly to an international public. They envisioned world government as a deliberative democratic forum wherein questions of shared national concern could be addressed. World parliamentarians were by definition privileged elites. They sought to use their elite status to gain support for world government in their respective domestic political spheres, as well as to influence world opinion more broadly. Finally, world parliamentarians believed that questions of international peace, nuclear war, world food shortages, and international development demanded a global, rather than national or colonial, response. While their prescriptions for world government bear the institutional and structural preoccupations of the post-1945 era, in broader ideational terms their vision of collective global deliberation concerning global problems anticipated the spirit and practice of twenty-first century global governance.

**Jansen, Hanna** (University of Amsterdam)

[h.e.jansen@uva.nl](mailto:h.e.jansen@uva.nl)

***From the International to the National and Back: Negotiating Ideas of the Anti-Imperial Nation in Central Asia in the Cold War***

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**Konieczna, Anna** (Science Po Centre d'histoire)

[anna.konieczna@sciencespo.fr](mailto:anna.konieczna@sciencespo.fr)

***Between National and Transnational Setting: the Anti-apartheid Movement in France (1960-1974)***

While being a part of the global anti-colonial struggle, the anti-apartheid movement became over the years one of the most powerful social movements grouping diverse organisations in more than 100 countries all over the world. The process of internationalisation was the consequence of the activity of South African dissidents, such as members of the ANC. It was also encouraged by the emergence of the transnational political culture that sees norms – such as human rights and social equality – rather than national interests at heart of political activity. The aim of this presentation would be to show first of all how the anti-apartheid cause came into the public space in France. It will be argued that the existence of the French anti-apartheid movement was a consequence of the activity of three overlapping groups acting at national and transnational level: 1/ the national French networks (post-anti-colonial movement; radical left; anti-racist movement and Christian networks); 2/ the ANC's transnational solidarity networks such as external missions and exiles, and 3/ transnational connexions between the European anti-apartheid movements and member's organisations (trade unions, human rights associations, etc). The convergence between these three scales that led to the creation of the French anti-apartheid movement resulted also from the conjunction of the specific historical circumstances occurring simultaneously in France and South Africa: the decolonisation process of the French colonies, the reconfiguration of the French left along with the growing international criticism of the apartheid regime. Finally, this presentation aims at analysing the interactions within and between the national and transnational level, and, their impact on the effectiveness of the anti-apartheid movement in France. It will be argued that national and transnational level may have both positive and negative effect on the solidarity movement as it can further (cross-fertilization process, transfer of knowledge and harmonisation of points of view through debates), but also hamper (rivalry over leadership and tensions over the strategy) its activity. This presentation would focus on the history of the movement between 1960 and 1974, that is before the date that the existing literature identifies as a starting point of the anti-apartheid activity in France. The initial date, the year 1960, corresponds to events in Sharpeville.

**Marcus, Nathan** (European University Institute)

[namarcus@gmail.com](mailto:namarcus@gmail.com)

***The League of Nations and National Minorities: The Case of South Tyrol***

Carol Fink and other historians have argued that efforts by the League of Nations to protect national minorities following the First World War might have been counterproductive. Open to abuse from ethnic minorities and irredentists in protector states, they served more to perpetuate than to solve these problems. Such a view posits that without interference from the League's Minorities Commission, nation states and the ethnic minorities they harboured or protected, might have had better chances at finding a workable solution to overcome inter-ethnic strife.

The minority conflict around the Austrian population of South Tyrol presents an opportunity to investigate this counterfactual assertion. Italy was not a signatory to the Minority Treaty and repeated appeals to Geneva from South Tyroleans were met with determined silence from the

League's Minorities Section. My paper traces various attempts by individuals and interest groups to circumvent the League's opposition and internationalize the question of South Tyrol, most successfully by submitting it to meetings of the World Congress of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies and the Inter-parliamentary Union. At the same time I show how government officials in Germany, Austria and Italy, interested in resolving the question, worked to prevent such internationalization of the problem.

Based on primary sources from the archives in Vienna, Innsbruck, Rome, Berlin, London and Geneva, I will argue that it was precisely the failure to internationalize the conflict and the refusal of the League of Nations to debate or intervene on behalf of Austrians in South Tyrol, which facilitated the compromise of 1930. That year, Italy's Benito Mussolini and the Austrian Chancellor Johannes Schober signed an accord, which effectively abandoned the South-Tyrolean to their fate, in return for Italian diplomatic assistance in obtaining a foreign loan for Austria. These findings will provide credence to the claim of Fink et al. that failure to internationalize the South-Tyrol question contributed to its temporary solution.

**Raza, Ali** (Zentrum Moderner Orient)

[Ali.Raza@zmo.de](mailto:Ali.Raza@zmo.de)

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**Stolte, Carolien** (Leiden University)

[c.m.stolte@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:c.m.stolte@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

***From Delhi to Cairo. Mobilising Anti-Imperialist Activists across 1950s Afro-Asia***

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**Richard, Anne-Isabelle** (Leiden University)

[a.i.richard@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:a.i.richard@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

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