

International Symposium „Diplomacy and Global Governance“

Veranstalter: Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland, DDS; United Nations Office at Geneva, UNOG

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How have international standards been defined and applied in the last two centuries, even in the absence of a global, overarching authority? How did international and national interests interact in the process of negotiating those standards? What role did both governmental and non-governmental actors play? How did states handle these globally defined rules?

These were the main questions asked in the international symposium „Diplomacy and Global Governance“ held on October 4, 2013 in the Palais des Nations, home of the United Nations Office at Geneva, marking the end of the 12th International Conference of Editors of Diplomatic Documents, which brought together participants from 5 continents from October 1 to 5, 2013.

The research group of the Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland (DDS) was responsible for organising the Conference with the collaboration of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and the support of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) as well as the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). The participants were welcomed on October 1 by Sacha Zala (Berne), director of the research centre of the DDS. The next day, the Conference officially opened with an inaugural speech by the Director-General of the UNOG, KASSYM-JOMART TOKAYEV (Geneva). PETER MAURER (Geneva), President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), then spoke on the role of global governance. Other important items on the agenda were the reports given by participants on their projects' newest developments¹, as well as the workshops in which current questions related to editing – such as the issue of the many languages of diplomatic documents or the role of social media – were discussed. The work-

shop entitled „Going Online and Connecting Diplomatic Documents – Possibilities of Digital Collaborations“ gave the opportunity to present the new collaborative project between the DDS and the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS). Within the context of this collaboration, the FRUS are making use of a web service² developed by the DDS, Metagrid, which is now under the auspice of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW). An important aspect of the Conference of Editors was the founding of the „International Committee of Editors of Diplomatic Documents“.³

On October 4, the public symposium then welcomed a large assistance, with over 150 participants present at both panels. Sacha Zala welcomed the audience and presented the main questions behind the symposium. BENEDIKT HAUSER (Berne), historian and head of Education Strategy and Cooperation, SERI, presented some thoughts on the importance of editing diplomatic documents, emphasizing their importance, both for historians and for the public, for a factual approach and better understanding of the past.

The papers of the first panel analyzed „The Development of Global Governance“ in the *longue durée*, a point highlighted by panel chairwoman Blandine Blukacz-Louisfert (Geneva) in her introduction, who indicated that the wall paintings of the room hosting the symposium, representing the construction works of the Palais des Nations, dated from the period of the League of Nations.

In the first presentation of the symposium, „Of Concerts, Transnational Movements, and International Bureaus: Origins and Trajectories of International Governance in the 19th Century“ MATTHIAS SCHULZ (Geneva) traced back the origins of interna-

¹International Editors of Diplomatic Documents: <<http://www.diplomatic-documents.org/project-progressions-and-editorial-practices-2011-2013>> (19.02.2014).

²See U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian: <<http://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/root-elihu>> (19.02.2014).

³International Editors of Diplomatic Documents: <<http://www.diplomatic-documents.org/international-committee-editors-diplomatic-documents>> (19.02.2014).

tional governance to the 19th century. Asserting that governance was then international, not „global“ as it mainly concerned Europe, and rarely „transnational“, as governments played the main or even the only role, Schulz distinguished several forms of governance in the 19th century, but focused on two of them: the Concert of Europe and the Public International Unions. The cooperation of European great powers in the Concert of Europe prefigured forms of international governance of security issues, such as the League of Nations or the United Nations. Schulz argued that the Concert successfully limited conflicts in Europe during much of the century, in some cases even against the will of a great power, unlike its more modern and institutionalized counterparts. While the Concert was concerned with war and security, the Public International Unions were a form of governance of technical and economic questions, such as railways, the telegraph or the mail. Schulz showed their growing importance in this first age of globalization, and argued that internationalism and imperialism thus *both* fostered the extension of the international market.

In her talk entitled „The League of Nations or How to Hide the Effects of Global Governance“, MADELEINE HERREN (Basel) emphasized the importance of the archives of the League of Nations for documenting the history of global governance, and asked how „global“ this governance actually was. She demonstrated the eurocentric nature of the rules of the administration of the League through the example of the „home leaves“ to which the staff was entitled: defining a country as „home“ was a difficult task for many in the interwar years, and only West Europeans got one home leave every year, the staff from other parts of the world only every two or three years. The liaison offices of the League in Asia were another case demonstrating this bias. While their role was supposed to be limited to informing the local population on health issues, the surviving documents of the Indian Office show the tensions with the General Secretariat of the League in Geneva, as the liaison office sent numerous newspaper clippings documenting local criticisms concerning European actions in India. During the Second World War, the role of the Indian Office

changed once again, as it sent war intelligence hidden as apparently technical reports.

In the third presentation of the first panel, SACHA ZALA (Berne), examined „Switzerland Facing Global Governance“. During the interwar period, Switzerland had become an important center for international organizations, as the government had successfully competed to obtain the seat of several Public International Unions. Gaining prestige and political power from this form of internationalism, Switzerland favored the unions and the international conferences over competing systems such as the League of Nations, which tried to integrate the unions, and the developing Fascist internationalism of Germany and Italy. In particular, Zala showed a statistical analysis of the participation of Switzerland in international conferences, the result of a research project led with Madeleine Herren. These conferences, regarding questions such as science, communication and traffic, nature, agriculture or labour policy, may be disregarded by some diplomatic historians, since they do not belong to the sphere of high politics. However, Zala argued, they demonstrate that a very large number of themes were considered a part of foreign policy: the government declined only 16 percent of the invitations to conferences, sending and paying experts of all kinds, including in many cases delegates from the civil society.

The discussion following the panel underlined the great differences between the situations described in the presentations and current times. One question especially reminded the audience that the day of the symposium was a day of national mourning in Italy, after the death of over 300 immigrants in the wreck of a boat in the Mediterranean Sea near Lampedusa, and emphasized that there was no international governance of migrations in the late 19th century.

An underlying theme of the first panel, the importance of examining closely the interests at play in international organizations, rather than seeing them as cosmopolitan arenas, was also present in the afternoon panel on „Global Governance and the United Nations System“. The first speaker, SANDRINE KOTT (Geneva), focused in her talk entitled „L’OIT: Expertises nationales et normes sociales inter-

nationales“ on the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a case for studying the dialectical relations between the national and international levels. While the standards developed in the ILO may appear as really transnational, Kott emphasized how much the position of the experts in their own national contexts mattered, for instance in the case of Andreas Grieser, occupying both important positions in the international committees on social insurance and in the German Department of Labor. In a second step, she showed that the new expertise created in the international organizations needed networks to be „exported back“ into the national contexts. While preexisting networks, such as the Catholic church, were very important, the organizations also tended to create their own networks, sectoral international associations, and to rely on personal relationships and contacts.

With the title „La France et la gouvernance globale: le rôle du représentant français au Conseil de sécurité (1970–1972)“, MAURICE VAÏSSE (Paris) studied the case of Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, French ambassador and delegate at the Security Council, showing through a dense narrative how traditional diplomatic methods and national interests also matter in what might appear as the best example of „global governance“, the United Nations. At the beginning of the 1970s, France had a rather good image, owing to the settlement of the decolonization disputes, but was criticized for its small contribution to multilateral help and feared losing its permanent seat in the Security Council. Vaïsse argued that Kosciusko-Morizet was instrumental in improving the situation, detailing his action through several examples, such as his initiative for a meeting with the USSR, Great Britain and the USA concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or the little known French support for the election of the Austrian Kurt Waldheim as Secretary-General, because he was both French-speaking and francophile („francophone et francophile“).

The last speaker of the symposium, ADAM HOWARD (Washington, DC) focused on „Diplomacy and Discord: The United States, the United Nations, and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1947–1976“. Howard covered in a broad

overview the years 1948 to 1977, illustrating the changing views of the United States toward the role of the United Nations in the Arab-Israeli conflicts. In 1947–1948, the UN played a major role through the Special Committee on Palestine, which proposed the partition of the territories and creation of separate states. In 1956, during the Suez Crisis, the UN also played an important role, even sending the first UN military force, an intervention that was welcomed by the US, as they needed stability in the region to guarantee the flow of oil needed for the Marshall plan. This would change after the Six-Day War in 1967 and the capture of large territories by Israel, the United States would never thereafter give the same importance to the United Nations for settling the Arab-Israeli dispute. Howard also highlighted the changing attitude of several other key players in this conflict, for instance USSR's early support of the state of Israel.

HANS-ULRICH JOST (Berne), chairman of the second panel, concluded the symposium by some thoughts on the concept of „global governance“, emphasizing the many challenges that its use presents and the many limits posed to the effectiveness of international standards in the absence of a real „global government“.

Bringing together important scholars in the broad field of history of international relations, the symposium constituted a very good overview of the work being done in the field. It highlighted the shift in emphasis towards a critical discussion of concepts such as internationalism, cosmopolitanism and global governance. Implicitly or explicitly, the speakers revealed the importance of discussing not only high politics, but communication technologies or labor policy as well; of looking for Eurocentrism even in the most apparently global and cosmopolitan settings; of relating internationalism with imperialism and of discussing the interplay between national and international levels. All presentations also emphasized the need for edited and published records, not only concerning the foreign policy of states, but also the international organizations. The symposium as a whole highlighted the important role played by the International Conferences of Editors of Diplo-

matic Documents as a platform for different national projects, allowing regular exchanges and discussions between national projects. It is to be hoped that the creation of the International Committee of Editors of Diplomatic Documents will help strengthen the ties between editors, historians and universities as well as foster new networking initiatives between national editing projects.

Kult 05.03.2014.

Conference Overview:

Symposium Opening

Sacha Zala (Director, Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland)

Benedikt Hauser (Head Education Strategy and Cooperation, State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation)

Panel 1 The Development of Global Governance

Matthias Schulz (University of Geneva), Of Concerts, Transnational Movements, and International Bureaus: Origins and Trajectories of International Governance in the 19th Century

Madeleine Herren (University of Basel), The League of Nations or how to hide the effects of global governance

Sacha Zala (Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland), Switzerland Facing Global Governance

Panel 2 Global Governance and the United Nations System

Sandrine Kott (University of Geneva), L'OIT: expertises nationales et normes sociales internationales

Adam Howard (Foreign Relations of the United States), Diplomacy and Discord: The United States, the United Nations, and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1947–1976

Maurice Vaisse (Documents Diplomatiques Français), La France et la gouvernance globale: le rôle du représentant français au Conseil de sécurité (1970–1972)

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