



The Aftermath of the First World War: Humanitarianism in the Mediterranean

Call for Papers

Convenors: Silvia Salvatici (University of Milan) and Johannes Paulmann (Leibniz Institute of European History Mainz) in co-operation with the German Historical Institute Rome and the Villa Vigoni – German Italian Centre for European Excellence

Date: 3 – 4 December 2019

Venue: University of Milan, Italy

In the memory of 1919, the signing of the peace treaties and the foundation of the League of Nations figure prominently. The year also saw the birth of the Third International and ushered in a turbulent post-war period of revolutions and counter-revolutions, which drastically changed the international balance of power and incubated the fascist movements that in 1922 subverted the fragile democracy in Italy. As a result, the attention of scholarly and public debate focus on post-war political, diplomatic and institutional history and on Central and Eastern Europe. The conference proposes a dual shift of perspective: thematic and geographical.

On the one hand, it focuses on international relief and rehabilitation programs during and in the aftermath of war. This will direct attention to international projects for political and social stabilization and the transformation processes that took place in post-war societies. It will allow us to examine the effects the war had on international relations in peacetime from a different perspective than the better-known diplomatic history. On the other hand, the conference specifically concerns the Mediterranean area thereby shifting our attention away from the well-studied Northern European and Transatlantic region. It investigates the post-war rise of humanitarianism in the countries of Southern Europe, in the colonial territories of North Africa, in the Balkans and in the Middle East. The Mediterranean saw the redrawing of the geopolitical map after the disintegration of the old empires, while at the same time a challenge to European colonialism began to rise in several places. Humanitarian projects took different forms and meanings in these contexts, but they were usually

conceived as instruments that would have an impact on the long term, not simply as an immediate response to temporary crises.

Research has begun to show the relevance that humanitarian affairs had for the League of Nations, which also operated in the Balkans and the Middle East. However, the League programs are only one chapter in the history of post-war relief, which saw the mobilization of national states, large and small private agencies, religious groups, societies founded on a common political ideology, experts in sectors such as medicine, public health, or education. The purpose of the conference is to study the way in which these different actors cooperated, interacted, and came into conflict, both in designing aid programs at the headquarters and in implementing them on the spot and within local communities. Specific case studies have shown that the historical development of humanitarianism came about through extensive transnational networks based on religious affiliation, on institutional relations among states, and on professional skills. With reference to the specific post-war context, the conference intends above all to highlight the way in which these networks, usually studied separately, came intersected and how the configuration in the Mediterranean area, including responses from within the societies concerned, shaped the development of humanitarianism at large.

We invite proposals for papers on any of the themes, topics and areas mentioned above. The time period covered may reach from the First World War into the 1930s discussing the aftermath and effects of continued or renewed war in the regions studied. The proposal should highlight the colonial and national contexts, the contemporary ideas on political and social stabilisation and the effects of the measures taken.

Please send an abstract of no more than 300 words and a short CV by **April 8, 2019** to Silvia Salvatici (silvia.salvatici@unimi.it) & Johannes Paulmann (paulmann@ieg-mainz.de)

The conference will take place from 3 – 4 December 2019, at the University of Milan, Italy. Travel and accommodation will be covered.