

The Reluctant Internationalists

Spring Term Newsletter 2015



Jessica Reinisch on Frenetic Internationalism

At one of our regular attempts to grapple with the slippery concept of 'internationalism', we were struck by the fact that the actors in this field often seemed to be in a permanent state of frenzy and excitement: it was "internationalism now or never", "internationalism or doom". This prevalence of impending crises in internationalist projects is one of several themes we are developing in our special issue of *Contemporary European History*, currently in preparation for publication next year.

Although perhaps not quite a matter of life or death, we have had a busy term. We've been going to conferences and archives, working on manuscripts, teaching new courses, giving talks, writing grant applications, and making plans for next term. Our [website](#) has details of all of this, and now also has the option to subscribe to updates. In this newsletter you can read about some of the conferences we attended, which left us with the overall impression of a growing diversity and complexity in the historiography of internationalism. Johanna Conterio's conference on "The Black Sea in the Socialist World", which took place in February, and Ana Antic's conference on "Homecomings: experiences and narratives of anti-fascist resistance veterans and the construction of postwar Europe", which will take place in April, both offer original ways of thinking about international and national history. The "Homecomings" [programme](#) is now online; if you'd like to attend, please contact a.antic@bbk.ac.uk. In this newsletter you can also read about the four Visiting Fellows who are joining us next term. Finally, here and in future newsletters we are including a noticeboard for events, publications and new projects concerning the history of internationalism and related fields. Any news to be included in the next one should be emailed to reluctant.internationalists@gmail.com by Monday, 22 June 2015.

Contents

- 2 Where we were this term and what's on next
- 3 Publications and Awards
- 4 Visiting Fellows 2015
- 5 Summer Term Conferences
- 6 Reports
- 7 Internationalism at the European University Institute
- 8 Noticeboard



Talks and Conferences

Where we went this term

Jessica Reinisch, "Public health in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany", at *Medicine and Public Health in the USSR and the Eastern Bloc 1945-1991*, Paris, 23-24 January 2015.

Dora Vargha, "The Sabin vaccine trials: a communist project?", Paper presented at *Medicine and Public Health in the USSR and the Eastern Bloc 1945-1991*, Paris, 23-24 January 2015.

Johanna Conterio, "'Socialist Design Around the Black Sea: Romanian and Bulgarian Models for the Development of Soviet Health Resorts, 1958-1982," at *The Black Sea in the Socialist World*, Birkbeck, University of London, February 6-7, 2015.

Johanna Conterio, "'The Florida and California of the Soviet Union': Sochi and the Invention of the Subtropics," at the *Russian History Seminar, School of Slavonic and East European Studies*, February 23, 2015.

Dora Vargha, "The globalization of vaccine trials: live polio vaccine development in the Cold War", at *The Globalization of medicine and public health: economic and social perspectives (1850-2000)*, University of Lausanne, 12-13 March 2015

Johanna Conterio, "The Global Botanical Roots of the Soviet Pharmaceutical Industry: The Case of Quinine," at *The Globalization of Medicine and Public Health: Economic and Social Perspectives (1850-2000)*, University of Lausanne, March 12-13, 2015.

Dora Vargha, "'There is no Cold War': Networks of Exchange in Polio Prevention in the 1950s", at *Close Encounters: the Socialist East and the Capitalist West in Cold War Interactions and Imagination*, University of Amsterdam, 19-20 March 2015.

Where you'll see us next

Dora Vargha, "Interpersonal or international? Polio vaccine research and the WHO in the Cold War", at *International Health Organizations (IHOs): The history for the future network conference*, Shanghai University, Shanghai, China, 23-26 April 2015

Ana Antic, "Heroes in chains: Yugoslav resistance veterans in post-war 're-education' prisons, 1949-1956", at *Homecomings: Experiences and Narratives of WWII Resistance Veterans and the Construction of Postwar Europe*, Birkbeck, 24-25 April 2015

Dora Vargha, "Cold War epidemic management and the roots of the eradication campaign", at the *Annual Meeting of the AAHM*, Yale University, New Haven, 30 April-3 May 2015

Dora Vargha, "Disability History and the Boundaries of Body and Machine: the iron lung patient as a 'new life-form'", at *The History of the Body: Approaches and Directions: Colloquium at the Institute for Historical Research*, London, 16 May 2015.

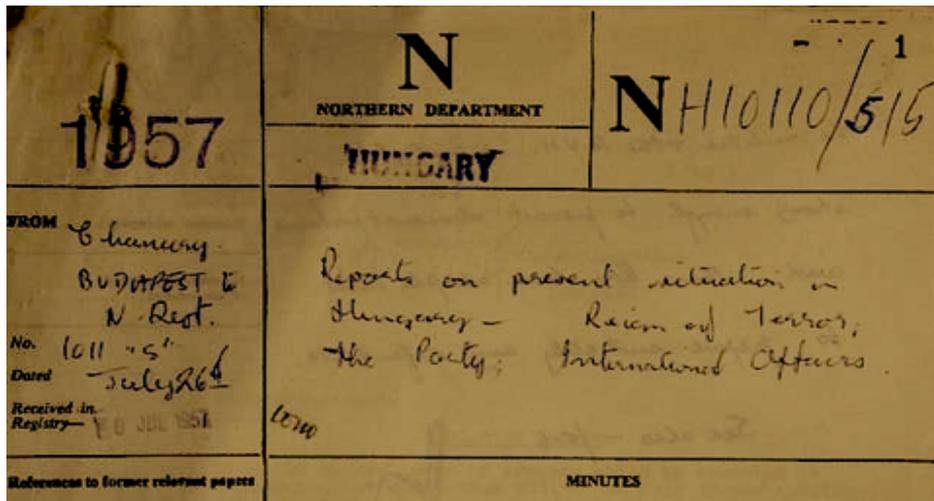
Jessica Reinisch, "History and International Health", *Royal Society of Medicine, History of Medicine Society Annual General Meeting*, 3 June 2015.

Dora Vargha, "When vaccines travel: translating Salk vaccine from lab to field across the Iron Curtain" at *Medicines, Translations, Histories: Symposium at the University of Manchester*, June 11-12 2015.

Ana Antic, "Film and Communism: Edifying the New Man", at: *Brainwash: History, Cinema and the Psy-professions*, Birkbeck College, London, 3 -4 July 2015.

David Bryan, "Fighting for Europe: European Narratives and Spanish Experiences in the Blue Division", *International Conference of Europeanists*, Paris, 8-10 July 2015.

David Bryan, "Axis Internationalism: Spanish health experts and Nazi Germany", *5th Meeting of Young Researchers in Contemporary History*, Barcelona, 15-17 July 2015.



Publications and Awards

The Reluctant
Internationalists

You can see all our publications on our website, [here](#). Recent additions to the list include:

Johanna Conterio, "Inventing the Subtropics: An Environmental History of Sochi, 1929-1936," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter 2015): 91-120.

Dora Vargha, Review of Marius Turda, *Eugenics and Nation in Early 20th Century Hungary* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), *Medical History*, Vol.59, No.2, April 2015, 338-339.

David Bryan, "Agents of Internationalism: conference report", *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 79, forthcoming in April 2015

Ana Antic, "Therapeutic violence: Psychoanalysis and political 're-education' in Cold War Eastern Europe", in: Daniel Pick and Matt Ffytche, eds, *Psychoanalysis in the age of totalitarianism*, Routledge [forthcoming, 2015]

Grants

Johanna Conterio and **Ana Antic** have been awarded a number of grants to support their conferences. **Johanna Conterio** has received grants from the Wellcome Trust, the British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies, the Society for the Social History of Medicine, and the Birkbeck Institute of the Humanities towards her conference "[Landscapes of Health: The Black Sea in the Socialist World](#)", which took place in early February 2015. **Ana Antic** has received grants from the Wellcome Trust and the Birkbeck Institute of the Humanities for her conference "[Homecomings: Experiences and Narratives of WWII resistance veterans and the construction of postwar Europe](#)", which will take place on 24 & 25 April 2015. Details on both events can be found on [our website](#). **Dora Vargha** will be attending the annual meeting of the [American Association for the History of Medicine](#) in New Haven in April/May, for which she received a travel grant from the organization.

Friederike Kind-Kovács

Assistant Professor, University of Regensburg



Friederike is a historian of childhood, Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, and the author of *Written Here, Published There: How Underground Literature Crossed the Iron Curtain* (Central European University Press, 2014). During her fellowship she will be conducting research for her second book, *The Embattled Child: Child Welfare in Interwar Hungary between International Philanthropy and National Propaganda, 1918-1944*, in which she explores the effects of the First World War and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire on children in central Europe, with a special focus on Hungary.

Brigid O'Keeffe

Assistant Professor, Brooklyn College



Brigid is a specialist in late imperial Russian and Soviet history, with interests in internationalism, ethnicity, citizenship and everyday Soviet life. She is the author of *New Soviet Gypsies: Nationality, Performance and Selfhood in the Early Soviet Union* (University of Toronto Press, 2013). She is currently working on a new book, *Speaking Transnationally: Esperanto, Citizen Diplomacy and Internationalism in Russia, 1887-1939*.

Jessica Pearson-Patel

Assistant Professor, University of Oklahoma



Jessica is a historian of France, the French empire, international organisations, public health and development. During her residence at Birkbeck, She will work on a book manuscript, *The Colonial Politics of Global Public Health: France and the United Nations in Postwar Africa*. She will conduct more research on the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara, a joint Franco-British organisation active in developing public health in the French and British African colonies after the Second World War.

Francesca Piana

Postdoctoral Fellow, Swiss National Science Foundation

The Reluctant Internationalists project is also delighted to host Francesca's extended stay at Birkbeck from May 2015 to November 2016. Francesca is currently working on two projects: a book manuscript on the history of international initiatives for prisoners of war and refugees at the end of the First World War, and a project entitled *Women and Humanitarian Work: Three Parallel Lives, ca. 1880s-1950*.

You'll find more information about all our visiting fellows, past and present, as well as future plans, on the [Reluctant Internationalists website](#)

Visiting Fellows
2015

Homecomings: Experiences and Narratives of WWII resistance veterans and the construction of postwar Europe

April 24-25, 2015, Birkbeck College

This conference will tell a much-neglected transnational European story of experiences of WW2 resistance, and address the mismatch between resistance soldiers' expectations and their post-war socio-political realities. The conference will advance our understanding of the history of soldiers' trauma – physical and psychological – in the context of post-war social and cultural history and memory. It will examine the issue of veterans' reactions to states' attempts at appropriating or sanitizing the memory of the resistance, and veterans' ability to influence national politics; internationalism of veterans' organizations; veterans' conceptualizations of justice, retribution and reconciliation; as well as everyday experiences of resistance soldiers in post-war societies and (both harmonious and fraught) relationships between different veterans' associations.

See our website for the [detailed programme](#).

To reserve a place, please contact a.antic@bbk.ac.uk

Friday, 24 April 2015

9:45 – 12:00 Resisters imagine the post-war world: Hopefulness and disappointment as a pan-European experience

Anifa Prazmowska, LSE; Roderick Bailey, Oxford; Mason Norton, Edge Hill; Samuel Kruizinga, Amsterdam. Discussant: Jessica Reinisch, Birkbeck

13:00 – 15:00 Conflicts over victimhood: Defining war trauma

Ben Zajicek, Towson; Ralf Futselaar, NIOD; Maria Teresa Brancaccio, Maastricht; Ben Shephard, Bristol.

15:30 – 17:30 Clashes with post-war states: Heroes in disgrace

Pieter Lagrou, Brussels; Robert Dale, Nottingham Trent; Ana Antic, Birkbeck. Discussant: Richard Bessel, York

18:00-19:30 Round-table discussion: Homecomings in the twentieth

century: War veterans between re-integration and pathology
Richard Bessel, Daniel Pick, Jessica Reinisch, Ben Shephard, Samuel Kruizinga.

Saturday, 25 April 2015

9:30 – 11.30 Alternatives to the resistance: Waffen-SS, German veterans and experiences from the other side

Svenja Goltermann, Zurich; Mark Edele, Western Australia; Niels Bo Poulsen, Royal Danish Defence College. Discussant: Ben H. Shepherd, Glasgow Caledonian

12:00-14:00 Re-inventing resistance: Constructing narratives of anti-fascism in the aftermath of the war

Jelena Batinic, Stanford; Robert Gildea, Oxford; Kenneth Slepyan, Transylvanian. Discussant: Marius Turda, Oxford Brookes



Summer term Conferences

Health and Welfare in Twentieth Century Europe

Joint Network Meeting

1-2 July 2015, Birkbeck College

This event brings together the Reluctant Internationalist group with the German Research Foundation (DFG)-funded network [Social Welfare and Health Care in Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe during the Long 20th Century](#).

This network, established in 2012 and directed by **Friederike Kind-Kovacs** and **Heike Karge** at the University of Regensburg, and **Sara Bernasconi** at the University of Zürich, brings together researchers across Europe working on a range of topics, from social hygiene to history of psychiatry.

The keynote lecture will be delivered by **Paul Lerner**. A full programme will be posted on our [Events page](#).

Reports

The Reluctant Internationalist group reports on an eventful Spring. Please see our [Blog](#) for more details.

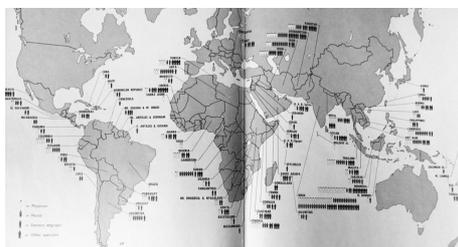
Landscapes of Health: The Black Sea in the Socialist World (6 & 7 February 2015)



This workshop, organized by **Johanna Conterio**, sought both to place the medical history of the Black Sea region in the burgeoning scholarship on global and transnational history, and to problematize both comparative and connective perspectives on the region. Participants agreed that thinking more broadly in terms of the region as an 'inter' or 'trans'-national space, united by medical approaches to nature and rest, albeit one ideologically divided at specific moments along nationalist lines, was enriching for scholars of the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. However, many participants also felt that it was important to remember how national boundaries were also reified

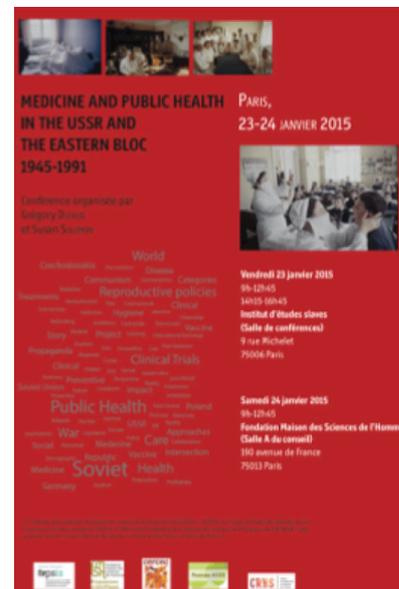
at various points in the twentieth century, and processes such as cultural, economic and population exchange could sometimes serve to concretize imagined notions of essential difference, rather than break them down. The workshop led to a productive discussion about the possibility of developing a new sub-field of history: Black Sea studies. A full workshop report was published by [Philippa Hetherington](#), and is also available on our [blog](#). A podcast of the workshop is now available [here](#). Johanna Conterio is currently editing a special issue of *Slavonic and East European Studies*, scheduled for publication in January 2016.

Globalization of medicine and public health: economic and social perspectives (1850-2000) (12 & 13 March 2015)



Convened by Sanjoy Bhattacharya (University of York, UK), Thomas David (University of Lausanne, Switzerland), Pierre-Yves Donzé (Kyoto University, Japan), Davide Rodogno (Graduate Institute, Geneva, Switzerland), this inter-disciplinary meeting aimed to explore the roots, development and consequences of the intensive globalizing trends in medicine and public health since the mid-nineteenth century. **Ana Antic's** full report will shortly be published on our [blog](#).

Medicine and Public Health in the USSR and the Eastern Bloc 1945-1991 (23 & 24 January 2015)



This workshop was convened by Grégory Dufaud (l'EHESS, LabEx TEPSIS, France) and Susan Gross Solomon (University of Toronto, Canada). It set out to explore the links and relationships between the Soviet Union's and the Eastern Block's medical and public health policies in the decades after World War II. You can read **Dora Vargha's** full report on our [blog](#).

In all three conferences, medical and scientific agendas emerged as potentially powerful lenses, able to bring into focus global, international and national dynamics in all their complexities. They are made all the more effective, in our view, when the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are part of the picture.



Internationalism at the European University Institute

Many of the features of life at the EUI are comfortingly familiar for students of internationalism, from the row of flags outside the front gate to the apparently universal tendency for people in international institutions to socialise in persistently national groups. Having been lucky enough to spend this term at the Department of History and Civilization in Florence, I've also been struck by the overlap between some of the central concerns of the *Reluctant Internationalists* project and much of the research being carried out here.

'Internationalism', it has to be said, is not a specific focus for many researchers at the EUI. What does stand out, however, is the number of people looking to blur and entangle the histories of nation, empire and regional integration in modern Europe, whether in the case of the nationalities question in the Habsburg Empire, the impact of colonialism and decolonisation on the European metropole, the neo-imperial dreams of Eurafrica, Eurasia, the Commonwealth and the French Union, or the post-war European 'rescue' of the nation state. 'Internationalism' plays a crucial role in all of these histories.

Behind such cases lies a set of interlinked questions about the nature and structure of the nation-state in the 20th century: the role of the nation, the nature of political communities, and the limits imposed by space, scale, race and culture. While scholars often approach them as distinct phenomena, the histories of nationalism, imperialism, Europeanism and internationalism are intrinsically intertwined, providing overlapping answers to these fundamental questions about the modern world. The reluctance of some of our internationalists to 'act internationally' is inseparable from the ambivalence of their imperialism, the fervour of their nationalism and their sense of being European. The variety of 'internationalisms' that we come across in our research seem less remarkable when we reflect on the diverse ways Europeans have approached questions of nation and empire. Looked at from the vantage point of the EUI, the relevance of the history of internationalism lies in part in the contribution it can make to these entangled historiographies, which are in turn inseparable from our own research.

David Bryan



Noticeboard

What's going on in the history of internationalism?

Conference “Women, Peace and Transnational Activism: A Century On”, 31 March 2015, Queen Mary University of London

The centenary of the Women's Peace Congress, which took place at The Hague in April 1915, offers a unique opportunity to reflect on the past, present and future of women's transnational organising and to ask how far feminist perspectives have been mainstreamed into international debates about security, development and human rights over the past century. This event, a joint initiative between QMUL's *Mile End Institute* and *History and Policy*, will take the 1915 Congress and the founding of the WILPF as a point of departure to explore critical questions about the relationship between gender, activism and international politics, drawing on a range of historical and contemporary perspectives.

More information: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/women-peace-and-transnational-activism-a-century-on-tickets-15649250329>

Contact: Helen McCarthy, h.mccarthy@qmul.ac.uk

Conference/Call for Papers “The History of Health and Disease in Central and Eastern Europe since 1945”, Warsaw, 14-15 October 2015

The Institute of National Remembrance and the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences are seeking papers for an upcoming conference on the history of health and disease in post-war Eastern Europe. The material destruction, difficult sanitary conditions, poverty, as well as infectious disease epidemics collecting a heavy toll are important phenomena, often overlooked in the historiography, describing the post-war reality of Eastern Europe. Some of the questions to be discussed during the conference are: to what extent was the theme of universal, free access to health care put into practice in the second half of the twentieth century? What problems were encountered while implementing the reforms of the health care system by the end of the 1980s? How were they perceived by ordinary people?

Deadline for abstracts is 30 April 2015, and they should be sent to european.healthhistory@gmail.com

Contact: Ewelina Szpak, enka2@o2.pl

Conference “The Global Public: Its Power and its Limits”, German Historical Institute in London, 22-24 October 2015, convened by Valeska Huber and Juergen Osterhammel

The conference will explore theories and practices of a global public in the long twentieth century. Recent forms of mass protest and debates around open, censored or intercepted flows of information have triggered debates about the power and limits of the global public. Yet many preconditions for such a global public had their origin in the last decades of the nineteenth century, when global travel became more standardised and new media such as telegraphy, mass print and later film entered the scene. During the two world wars, the global public was mobilized and manipulated in an unprecedented manner. Politicians recognised the global public as a force for prestige and image cultivation, for instance during the Cold War, turning it into an arena of intense competition.

More information:

http://www.ghil.ac.uk/events_and_conferences/conferences_and_workshops/2015/global_public.html

Contact: huber@ghil.ac.uk

Interview “Global health has a history”, with Steven Palmer

<http://www.revistahcsm.coc.fiocruz.br/english/global-health-has-a-history/>

The Reluctant Internationalists

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reluctantinternationalists/>

<https://www.facebook.com/reluctantinternationalists>

[@Reluctant_Int](https://twitter.com/Reluctant_Int)

