



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE LONDON
DEUTSCHES HISTORISCHES INSTITUT LONDON

Call for Papers

The Dilemmas of International Humanitarian Aid in the Twentieth Century

Conference in London

May 12th-14th, 2011

The German Historical Institute and the Department of International History at the London School of Economics are organizing a conference on the history of humanitarian aid in the twentieth century. The proceedings form part of the Gerda Henkel Visiting Professorship established at LSE and GHIL.

The conference encompasses the history of international humanitarian aid from the end of the nineteenth century to our times. It focuses on the dilemmas, contradictions and ambiguities of humanitarian commitment. In a historical perspective, humanitarian assistance covered a broad range of measures. These included emergency relief delivered to people struck by natural or man-made disasters; longer term efforts to prevent suffering from famine, ill health or poverty; or schemes such as international adoption, specific campaigns against human rights abuses, and humanitarian intervention by armed forces. Indeed, identifying the evolving connections and differentiations between the different forms of humanitarian aid will be one of the topics for discussion.

The conference investigates cross-border aid in a European and global frame. Donors and recipients as well as their interactions will be analysed. Non-governmental, governmental, religious and secular organisations and individuals were active in the field throughout the twentieth century. They were national, multinational or international in character, and their activities were determined, to various degrees, by moral issues, politics, and organizational or personal interests. The intended or real effects of international humanitarian aid have been a subject of contemporary discussions on many occasions. Less attention has been paid to the equally important agency of the 'recipients'. Their role needs to be assessed in the

context of colonial rule, decolonization, economic dependency, international politics and global governance.

The conference seeks to convene historians as well as political and social scientists, anthropologists or scholars from other disciplines with an interest in the contemporary history of humanitarian aid. Participants are invited to present their research by reference to the essential dilemmas of humanitarian commitment, among which the following deserve special but not exclusive interest:

- development of terms and concepts (aid, solidarity, relief, development, humanitarianism, basic needs); construction of distant relations
- internationalisation of humanitarian aid and national aid structures; national and international politics of humanitarian commitment
- the beneficiaries' agency
- effects of aid and indigenous coping mechanisms
- proliferation of and competition between humanitarian aid agencies
- mediatisation of humanitarian aid
- volunteer aid workers and expert cultures; faith-based activities and the secularisation of relief
- civil society and state intervention

In terms of geographical, temporal or thematic range, more general as well as specific papers are welcome. At the conference recent and current research will be discussed in order to facilitate conversations between historians and other scholars working on different areas of humanitarian aid in the twentieth century.

Please send proposals (including your name, institutional affiliation or place of residence and title of paper; abstract no longer than 500 words) and a brief CV to the convenor at the following address by **12th April 2010**: j.paulmann@lse.ac.uk

The conference takes place in London. Expenses for travel and accommodation will be covered.

Convenor:

Prof. Dr. Johannes Paulmann

Gerda Henkel Visiting Professor 2009-10

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