

EuParl.net Newsletter

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European Information and
Research Network on
Parliamentary History

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Dear readers,

Walter Bagehot described Parliament in 1860 as “the most efficient instrument for expressing the practical opinion of cultivated men which the world has ever seen”. Over the recent months, Britain offered a lot to test the thesis.

When I found my 16-year old son watching a Brexit discussion in the House of Commons on his smartphone, I realized we were witnessing a rare instance of a legislature that is being followed by the entire world, whilst the Speaker became global icon.

Much more was happening in the British context. The Commons tried to shift from a body scrutinizing hasty government decisions to an initiator of decisions. Yet the British political landscape seemed to lack people with determination, courage and imagination. As a result, no conclusion about Brexit, has, as yet been reached.

Such curious constellations stand in the very focus of EuParl.net research. Let me invite you to read more in this issue and wish you splendid summer holidays.

Yours Adéla Gjuričová



Scholarly Feast on Women's Day

Futuristic buildings of the German Bundestag in Berlin hosted the conference *Entering the Parliamentary Stage: Women in Parliament and Politics in International Comparison* that was held on 6–8 March 2019.

Our thanks go to Andreas Schulz (speaking on the left), Gisela Mettele, Tobias Kaiser, Adéla Gjuričová, Verena Mink and the whole organizing team from KGParl in Berlin, but also the event partners from Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Prague Institute of Contemporary History and the Masaryk Institute of Czech Academy of Science. For detailed report, see page 4.





EVENTS

Wir auch!

Bettina Tüffers and Verena Mink from KGParl convened staged reading of historical documents entitled *Us Too! 100 Years of Women's Voting Rights* on January 26, 2019. The selection of documents illustrated the circumstances

of the actual decision about women's suffrage, its consequences for politics and for the relationship between sexes. It covered the period between the first calls of German women for political participation in the 19th century and the entry of women into parliament in 1919.



The play was read by actors Inka Friedrich and Moritz Heidelberg.

Politics between Practice and Mythology

Workshop *Eurasian Parliamentary Practices and Political Mythologies* was held on June 17–18, 2019 in Heidelberg. It focused on the historical and “re-established” institutions of collective decision making on the territories of the former Russian, Qing and Ottoman Empires, as well as neighbouring regions of Eastern Europe, Central and East Asia. Research by historians, political scientists, anthropologists, and other scholars showed these institutions in indigenous, imperial and post-imperial contexts.

The workshop was part of the ERC project *Entangled Parliamentarisms: Constitutional Practices in Russia, Ukraine, China and Mongolia, 1905–2005* led by Ivan Sablin.

SAVE THE DATE

Parliament & Peterloo. Exhibition. **July 4 – Sept. 26, 2019.** Westminster Hall, London.

Finally Alone: Nation State, Representation and Sovereignty in Central Europe after 1989. Workshop. **Sept. 25–26, 2019.** Bratislava.

EuParl.net Board of Directors' Meeting. **Oct. 11, 2019.** Prague.

F. L. Rieger Prize 2019

The award is named after František Ladislav Rieger (1818-1903), leading Czech parliamentarian and one of the iconic figures of Czech politics during the Austrian Monarchy. It has been designed by the Chamber of Deputies to reward the best MA theses on parliamentary studies. Candidates have to explain their work to a specialist jury. The 2019 Rieger Prize Laureate is Michal Staněk, graduate of the Faculty of Law, Masaryk University in Brno. In thesis *Does Parliament Respect the Constitutional Court?* he concludes that “politics often stands over law in our parliamentary practice, and the MPs do not always manage to respect the Court jurisdiction even if they are familiar with it”.



F. L. Rieger Prize awarded by Radek Vondráček (left), Chairman of Czech Chamber of Deputies



PROJECTS

Volume on Parliamentarism in Germany: 1815–2020

KGParl is preparing a comprehensive presentation of German parliamentary history under the working title *Parlamentarismus in Deutschland 1815–2020. Historische Perspektiven auf die repräsentative Demokratie*. The work is intended for teachers, students, journalists and political actors. It will also aid academic reflection on the current state of parliamentary history, its self-understanding, and potential contribution to the current debate on parliamentary democracy and the challenges it faces. The editors are Dominik Geppert, Andreas Wirsching, Marie-Luise Recker, and Andreas Biefang.

On Peterloo Massacre

The British Parliament is commemorating the bicentenary of the Peterloo Massacre in August 1819, when cavalry charged into a crowd of 60,000–80,000 who had gathered in Manchester to demand reform of parliamentary representation. The exhibition *Parliament & Peterloo* was prepared by the History of Parliament Trust and the Parliamentary Archives. It explores political and social background to the Peterloo massacre and Parliament's response. Free visits in Westminster Hall are available from 4 July to 26 September.



New Focus on Parties

Constitution and Development of Parties in the New States of Germany 1989/90 to 2005 is the title of a brand-new project launched by KGParl in Berlin. It will focus on the period of the 1990s and early 2000s, in which the internal structure of the established German parties was reformed and parliamentary practice had to be negotiated between politicians socialized in the GDR and political “professionals” from West Germany. The analysis will focus on the specific German transformation following the Fall of the Berlin Wall, and will also consider the context of changing party landscape in Europe.

Welfare State Analytics

Welfare State Analytics. Text Mining and Modelling Swedish Politics, Media & Culture, 1945–1989 (WeStAc) is a digital humanities research project that will digitise literature, curate the already digitised collections, and perform research via probabilistic methods and text mining models. Using three massive textual datasets from Swedish politics from 1945 to 1989, including the archives of the Swedish Parliament, WeStAc will analyse how societal transformations can be empirically measured, for example by distant reading the notion of globalisation, or data-modelling of the ideas of emancipation and individualisation. WeStAc is a joint project of Umeå University and the National Library of Sweden.

CLARIN on Parliamentary Data

On 23–24 May 2019 CLARIN ParlaFormat workshop was held in Amersfoort. The aim was to present parla-CLARIN, standard format for parliamentary data to the research community and to identify potential issues related to its development, support and wide adoption. The proposal was prepared by Tomaž Erjavec and Andrej Pančur from the Institute of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, EuParl.net member from Slovenia and principal investigator within CLARIN – Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure.

Later this year, a revised version of parla-CLARIN will be available to public, and a follow-up workshop will be held. The participants will convert their parliamentary data into the parla-CLARIN format, report on problems and share conversion scripts. Comparative research is expected to be fostered by using uniform format of parliamentary data.

CLARIN arose from the idea that all digital language resources and tools from Europe and beyond should be accessible through a single sign-in online environment for the support of researchers in humanities and social sciences. It currently provides easy and sustainable access to digital language data (in written, spoken, or multimodal form) and offers advanced tools to discover, explore, annotate, analyse or combine such data sets, wherever they are located. Check the Services page at www.clarin.eu.





CONFERENCE REPORT

Entering the Parliamentary Stage – Women in Parliament and Politics in International Comparison. Berlin, 6 – 8 March 2019

The event commemorating the introduction of active and passive women's suffrage in Germany in January 1919 was held at Marie-Elisabeth-Lüders-Haus of the German Bundestag. Over 120 guests attended to discuss papers by 21 historians from nine different countries. Apart from Germany, the speakers came from the USA, Russia, the Czech Republic, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Poland, and Finland.

In four thematic sections, general and country-specific developments concerning women's suffrage were discussed in a comparative perspective. A number of case studies showed what had facilitated or hindered the introduction of voting rights for women who campaigned in various national and international networks. Further sections followed the patterns and types of political careers of women elected to parliament: these spanned from the verbal welcome, yet zero respect for newcomers, via awarding women the "honorary male" status, up to the perfectly represented, yet practically powerless women in Communist legislatures. How did they stage themselves in the political arena, and what reactions did they meet with in the media and in public?

The troubled routes from first women's suffrage campaigners via the first

seats for women in parliaments up to contemporary level of representation found fascinating illustration during the panel discussion on the opening evening. Two former politicians, Kristina Schröder, previous Minister of Family (CDU), and Brigitte Zypries, Minister of Justice and the first female Minister of Economy in SPD-led cabinets, openly talked about their careers in male-dominated politics. They made listeners aware of the progress in gender equality, as well as of the surviving obstacles and dilemmas of gender representation in contemporary institutions: Are women still supposed to represent other women?

The conference was financially supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the German-Czech Future Fund and the State Chancellery of the Free State of Thuringia. It was convened by KGParl in Berlin, in cooperation with the Chair of Gender History at the Historical Institute of the Friedrich Schiller University Jena and the Institute of Contemporary History and the Masaryk Institute and Archive of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. A conference-related volume will be published within the series *Parliaments and Parliamentarism in Europe*.

For the complete list of speakers, [see here](#).



BOOKS/SOURCES



REEVES, Rachel: *Women of Westminster: The MPs Who Changed Politics*. London 2019.

SABLIN, Ivan: *Parliaments and Parliamentarism in the Works of Soviet Dissidents, 1960s–80s*. In: *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, 2019.

BROWN, David – CROWCROFT, Robert – PENTLAND, Gordon (eds): *The Oxford Handbook of Modern British Political History, 1800–2000*. Oxford 2018.

IHALAINEN, Pasi – ILIE, Cornelia – PALONEN, Kari (eds): *Parliament and Parliamentarism. A Comparative History of a European Concept*. New York 2016.

ROZENBERG, Olivier – THIERS, Eric: *Traité d'études parlementaires*. Brussels 2018.

GUARRIGUES, Jean: *La République des traîtres: De 1958 à nos jours*. Paris 2018.



WINTGENS, Benedikt: *Treibhaus Bonn. Die politische Kulturgeschichte eines Romans*. Düsseldorf 2019.

HÄKKINEN, Ville: *From Counterrevolution to Consolidation? Language of Nation-Building in the Hungarian Parliamentary Debates, 1920–1928*. JYU Dissertations 82. Jyväskylä 2019. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-7766-5>

Vote 100 – online platform to learn about, watch and discuss material related to the history of Britain extending the suffrage for its citizens. <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/vote-100/>

Women and Parliaments. Blog series hosted by the History of Parliament Trust. <https://thehistoryofparliament.wordpress.com/category/women-and-parliament/>