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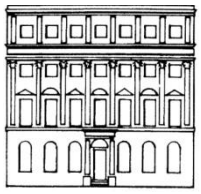

BULLETIN

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Johannes Paulmann:
The Dilemmas of International Humanitarian Aid in the Twentieth Century
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The Dilemmas of International Humanitarian Aid in the Twentieth Century. Conference organized as part of the Gerda Henkel Visiting Professorship jointly established at the German Historical Institute London and the International History Department of the London School of Economics and Political Science, held at the GHIL, 12–14 May 2011.

The conference addressed fundamental dilemmas of international humanitarian aid. Covering the history of humanitarian aid from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, it highlighted historical conjunctures such as wars and post-war periods, empires and decolonization, which contributed to the emergence of global humanitarianism as we know it today. It encompassed European, Western, and non-Western perspectives. The conference was attended by international scholars of history, political science, media studies, and anthropology. The convener Johannes Paulmann (first incumbent of the Gerda Henkel Visiting Professorship in 2009/10, now Director of the Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz) introduced the conference by explaining the term and concept of humanitarian aid. He argued in favour of a broad understanding which allows scholars to capture historical developments and fundamental dilemmas. He surveyed a field of equivalent terms and neighbouring concepts from 'relief' and 'rehabilitation' to 'development aid' and 'foreign aid'. Around this array of terms were several ideas which motivated those who provide humanitarian aid: 'charity', 'humanity', 'solidarity', 'civilizing mission', 'modernization', and 'global justice'. The aim of the conference was not to come up with a clear-cut definition of humanitarian aid, but to investigate a complex field and to analyse the strategic uses which aid agencies, governments, recipients of aid, and academics made of the various terms and concepts.

Multiple Foundations of International Humanitarianism

One of the foundations of humanitarianism lies in colonial settings. Vincent Viaene (Brasenose College, Oxford) outlined the internation-

The full conference programme can be found on the GHIL's website <www.ghil.ac.uk> under Events and Conferences.

al campaigns against abuses in the Belgian Congo from the 1870s to the 1900s by focusing on the role of religious internationalism. He demonstrated that Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic activists moved within the context of imperial and national power relations. Two types of humanitarian action may be distinguished. One was based on mass mobilization and a repertoire of sentimental rhetoric and drama; the other relied on expert witnesses and prose combined with lobbying parliament, the press, and politicians. The first type is best exemplified by the resurgent anti-slavery movement in 1888–90, pushed by the papacy and Cardinal Lavigerie of the White Fathers. The Catholic anti-slavery campaign gained its fervour from both the advance of Islam in neighbouring Sudan and the European culture wars with liberalism. The increased emphasis on 'humanity' as a battle cry derived from specific Christian and Catholic purposes. It ultimately served the consolidation and expansion of colonial rule in the Free State. After 1890 a different type of humanitarian movement critical of colonial practices in the Congo emerged. The Aborigines Protection Society (APS) and the Congo Reform Association (CRA) were instrumental in making public such abuses as forced labour and bodily mutilations. They efficiently combined expert witnessing to parliament, government, and the press with mobilizing empathy among the public at large. Photography as 'incorruptible' evidence reduced the complexities of the Congo system to key symbols of abuse.

Matthias Schulz (University of Geneva) explained another essential humanitarian tradition, namely, the Red Cross movement which had made the call for humanity at times of war its core feature since the 1860s. Empathy for the suffering of human beings, realpolitik, and new forms of internationalism all contributed to its peculiar nature. Schulz emphasized the crucial role of governments. He contended that neither utilitarian arguments for getting wounded soldiers back into battle nor the ideas of reciprocity and humanitarian commitment were decisive. Indeed, the adoption of humanitarian norms took hold in each European country under specific circumstances and for particular reasons. National associations strengthened patriotism and contributed to the militarization of civil society, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) advanced the development of the international humanitarian law of war. Schulz recognized a major limitation in the deliberate decision by the ICRC to restrict itself to aid at times of war rather than to expand into

peacetime activities during civil emergencies. As a consequence, the international Red Cross for a long time did not become a source of transnational solidarity. It was only in the aftermath of the First World War and in cooperation with private voluntary organizations and the League of Nations that the international Red Cross movement slowly extended its reach beyond the care of soldiers.

Apart from colonialism and war, religious organizations provided a third source of humanitarianism. Among them, the Society of Friends played a prominent part in internationalizing humanitarianism. Daniel Maul (University of Gießen) analysed the period from 1890 to the end of the First World War when the Quakers' relief work among victims of war and natural disasters became more professional. The tradition of experiencing and worshipping God through 'testimonies' offers only a partial explanation. By highlighting tensions inherent in their motives and comparing British and American Friends, Maul identified specific national and international factors which drove this development. A broader engagement in foreign relief emerged from the Young Friends Movement towards the end of the nineteenth century. The younger Friends shared a zeal for reform with other youth movements of the time. They also responded to the challenge posed by growing evangelical movements in the Christian world. The First World War confronted the Friends with the problem of how to reconcile their belief in peace with patriotic duties. Non-combatant service units offered an answer during the war. Afterwards, large-scale relief operations were regarded as necessary works of reconciliation and education for peace. Generational impetus and war-related issues were common problems on both sides of the Atlantic. Differences in other areas illustrate that transnational relief networks were also firmly embedded in national cultures. While foreign aid was quickly established among all Friends in Britain, young American Quakers active in this field remained an independent group outside official religious structures because no overall consensus existed on its desirability for the Society of Friends. Americans therefore had a greater need to emphasize professionalism, and they showed more caution in regard to cooperation with others.

The American Red Cross became involved in child welfare programmes in Russia towards the end of the First World War and during the revolutionary period. Jennifer Polk (University of Toronto) demonstrated that the Red Cross agents and official diplomatic observers were well aware of ulterior motives. In Petrograd the programme aimed to keep Russia in the war against Germany and Austria-Hungary; it sought to stabilize the Provisional Government and generally strengthen Russo-American relations. During the Allied intervention in 1918–19 the relief operations in effect served to protect military stores, thereby indirectly reinforcing military efforts against the Bolshevik government. Much more than the ICRC, the American Red Cross pursued an openly political agenda. Humanitarian aid was, at the same time, imbued with a somewhat naive belief in its effectiveness regarding education for democracy and the long-term friendship nourished by the provision of food to children.

Colonial rule elsewhere continued to frame humanitarian aid between the wars. The violent conflict in northern Morocco between the Berber population and the Spanish colonial army in the early 1920s gave rise to civilian casualties, mass killings, guerrilla tactics, air and gas warfare, hostage taking, and famine. Francisco Javier Martínez-Antonio (Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, CSIC, Madrid) analysed attempts to mobilize aid in terms of competing nationalism and restricted internationalism. Each of the parties involved—Spanish, French, and Moroccan—sought to raise funds and, at the same time, to prevent others from intervening on humanitarian grounds. International aid was obstructed, especially the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ICRC was first of all limited by its dependence on national Red Cross societies and the principle of sovereignty imbedded in its norms. The Spanish government, by framing the conflict in terms of 'police operations' against 'rebels', was able to prevent the Rifians from establishing a Red Cross society. It also effectively stopped the French Red Cross from acting as the agent of neutral humanitarian intervention. The Rifian belligerents, as the weakest player, hoped to obtain international recognition indirectly by involving the ICRC for their own political purposes. Their leader, Abd el-Krim, manipulated interna-

tional opinion by exaggerating the suffering of the civilian population and by showing foreign journalists around. The Rifian army, indeed, kept some of the food deliveries for their soldiers instead of distributing them to the needy. In conclusion, Martínez-Antonio emphasized the restrictions placed on international activities in a military conflict overshadowed by colonial rule.

Asymmetries also had a role in other parts of the world. The antagonism between China and the Western powers over the question of China's ability to govern itself after the First World War was played out not only in diplomatic circles but also in the field of humanitarian relief. Caroline Reeves (Emmanuel College, Boston) illustrated an American 'humanitarian imperialism' in her analysis of a prominent incident in 1923. A luxury train carrying wealthy foreign and Chinese passengers was hijacked by bandits who took the passengers hostage for five weeks. The widely publicized incident instigated relief efforts by the Chinese Red Cross and the American Red Cross (ARC), with the latter's China Central Committee running operations. The presence of the ARC's China Committee was in clear breach of international Red Cross policy not to establish or maintain RC societies in foreign countries. It reflected the ARC's expansive campaign in China and, indeed, undermined the position of the existing Chinese Red Cross. The ARC field representatives sought to furnish the Chinese with 'a model of proper and effective Red Cross activity' by taking a 'business-like' understanding of humanitarianism to its Chinese counterpart, which, contrary to evidence, was deemed in need of such development aid. This kind of civilizing mission in humanitarian disguise, Reeves contended, seriously undermined the considerable efforts which had been made since 1904–5 to develop Chinese philanthropy along Western lines. Building on established charitable traditions in the country, the Chinese Red Cross styled itself a modern innovation. It established international ties, advertised its national scope and the use of modern technology, and displayed a military image. The Lincheng incident of 1923 highlighted the contradictory nature of American humanitarian involvement abroad. It robbed the Chinese Red Cross of stature in the international community and the local arena.

Foreign activities in Greece and Asia Minor during the early 1920s illustrate the consequences for humanitarian aid in the context of complex emergencies in which an immediate crisis is linked by

armed conflicts to a partial breakdown of societal coping mechanisms and state authority. Relief quickly ran into dilemmas, solutions to which were contested between and within the various non-governmental and state actors. Davide Rodogno (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva) investigated the thin line between short-term relief and medium-term rehabilitation. After the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor, the city of Smyrna became the centre of a refugee crisis in 1922. A division over long-term aims existed among diplomatic agents, relief administrators, missionaries, and merchants. Some favoured the ethnic and religious diversity of the former Ottoman Empire and for reasons of economic vitality preferred solutions for the Greek refugees within Turkey. Others regarded Turkey as a victim of the European powers and blamed the Greek government for its alignment with British interests. They saw the Greek population as an obstacle to Turkish development and therefore favoured its departure to the European continent. With the outbreak of fire in Smyrna in September 1922 the question was resolved in an emergency by the men and women on the spot who favoured massive evacuation. The local 'solution' in Asia Minor lead to a local 'dilemma' elsewhere once the refugees arrived in Greece. The ICRC delegate in Greece, Rudolph de Reding, quickly sought to expand international activities beyond the traditional sphere. He developed the idea of *colonisation agricole* for the refugees on uncultivated land in Macedonia. The Geneva headquarters viewed this 'solution' with suspicion. De Reding, however personally crossed the line from relief to rehabilitation. In 1923 he became one of the League of Nations' experts on the 'exchange of populations', when he joined the League's Refugee Resettlement Commission which opened a new phase in humanitarian relief.

International humanitarian agents cooperated regularly, but rivalries were just as common, even between familial organizations. Irène Hermann (University of Fribourg) and Daniel Palmieri (University of Geneva/ ICRC) described the intense struggle within the Red Cross movement between the Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies and the ICRC during operations in Greece between 1941 and 1945. From the outset, the apparent cooperation was riddled by Swiss and Swedish tensions which partially stemmed from a decision taken by the British government. After agreeing to lift its blockade for relief operations, it insisted that practical implementation should be in the

hands of a neutral third party. London opted for the Swedish Red Cross to become the responsible agent because it considered the ICRC to be on 'too good terms with the occupying powers'. Tensions gained additional force from the national interests pursued by Sweden through its humanitarian commitment. The involvement was seen as a means of enhancing its standing in relation to Britain and was also motivated by opening market outlets for Swedish business in the post-war future. Nor, on the other hand, was the ICRC a purely charitable organization. The close personal ties between its members, the Swiss Red Cross, and the Swiss government allowed motives of self-interest to enter its dealings. Hermann and Palmieri concluded that the neutral governments attempted to regain and strengthen their international standing through activities in humanitarian relief after they had been criticized by the Allies for their economic arrangements with the Axis powers.

Originally providing crisis relief to children in countries suffering from war and its aftermath, the Save the Children International Union (SCIU), founded in 1920, developed into an expert international organization concerned with long-term welfare for children. Joelle Droux (University of Geneva) explored the ways in which the Union adapted its aims and practices in changing historical circumstances, especially during and after the Second World War. The transformation was a difficult process in which the International Union faced challenges in terms of its organizational structure, competition with other agencies, and clarification of its aims. By the mid 1920s, the SCIU had already claimed two different mandates; one for coordinating emergency relief in humanitarian crises, the other as an expert body for child welfare. The Second World War severely disrupted the mechanisms of transnational coordination used by the SCIU, that is, the circulation of information, people, and material, with the result that it was endangered by lack of funds, connections, and purpose. Between 1944 and 1947, the International Union finally turned from a relief agency for children into an international centre of expertise for the protection of children and young people, becoming part of a network of medical, educational, and judicial experts. And it established closer links with non-European partners, partly leaving its European origins behind. In the process, SCIU had to drop its universal ambitions and become a more focused and specialized agency.

Heide Fehrenbach (Northern Illinois University) located the origins of international adoption in international humanitarian social work after the First World War, here directed at refugee and migrant families. In the decades up to 1960 two strands of transformation took place, leading to distinct cultures of inter-country adoption. One was characterized by professionalization and an attempt to set international standards for procedures which aimed to make the welfare of the child paramount while preserving the rights of birth parents. This formed part of the emergence of international organizations and governance structures. The principal agents involved were the International Social Service (ISS) and later the United Nations. ISS was a non-governmental organization initiated by female social workers in 1919, targeting refugee emergencies in the aftermath of the war. As a response to the problems in several countries with war orphans and illegitimate or fatherless children after 1945, the principle focus began to change from reuniting separated families to 'creating' new families through inter-country adoption. The ISS became the primary non-sectarian organization for handling international adoption in the United States, Western Europe, and East Asia.

A different mode of adoption grew out of interrelated strands in the media, military occupation, and Christian works. While the ISS was an expert organization with few links to the media, this second, less formal, pattern was closely connected to visual media images, creating moral communities among viewers. In the United States two specific groups took up the cause of suffering children abroad. First, the African American press focused on institutional racism in Germany, directed against the children fathered by black American soldiers. Adoption by American families seemed a good solution to the assumed individual needs and a matter of civil rights. The creation of new families by inter-country adoption also guided the hands-on Christian humanitarian activism practised by evangelical Christians. This kind of 'moral witnessing' increasingly focused on Asia during the late 1940s and 1950s, advocating the adoption of children from China and Korea. Evangelical Christians, celebrities, and military personnel lobbied to liberalize immigration law in order to help suffering children find a new home and family in the United States. Thus, Fehrenbach concluded, two distinct approaches emerged: an expert culture of international social work and governance by international organizations; and a humanitarian commitment by various

religious, ethnic, and social groups relying on emotional appeal and the media for its purposes.

The establishment of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) has often been described as a crucial step in professionalizing global humanitarianism. Silvia Salvatici (University of Teramo, Italy) proposed a more complex evaluation. The main task of UNRRA's 'gigantic humanitarian crusade' between 1944 and 1947 was the relief and rehabilitation of Displaced Persons in Austria, Italy, and, above all, Germany. Its welfare work in the camps covered a wide range of activities from housing, feeding, and clothing to education, training, employment, recreation, and entertainment. Rehabilitation entailed a definition of the refugees' needs in both general and specific terms, for example, for mothers, children, or the sick. Salvatici argued that conceptualizing DPs as people in need labelled them as recipients; it mirrored the self-perception of UNRRA officers as rescuers who were thereby constructing their own collective identity. The description by UNRRA workers of the 'beneficiaries' as 'apathetic', or, in the case of mothers, as 'lacking a sense of maternal feeling', reflected their ideal of an active person. As welfare officers thought they knew better than the DPs, conflicts often erupted. The very idea of helping 'the people help themselves', which UNRRA described as its principle, can thus be seen very much in terms of constructing needs, despite existing coping mechanisms on the part of those receiving aid. Salvatici concluded that, if the aftermath of the Second World War was indeed a founding moment of contemporary humanitarianism, its techniques drew strongly on the humanitarianism of the inter-war period. It had entailed dilemmas of varying standards, contradictory practices, and the inadequate construction of identities both of relief workers and persons in need.

Humanitarianism at the Intersection of the Cold War and Decolonization

Humanitarianism after 1945 developed at the intersection of decolonization and the Cold War. Shobana Shankar (Georgetown University, Washington DC) explained how, by the end of the 1950s, African children had become the subject of humanitarian intervention by UNICEF. She demonstrated that this was a process of transition from one kind of international actor, Christian missions, to

another secular one, UNICEF, accompanied by the construction of African 'problems'. Practices and discourses pioneered by missionaries were overlaid with new justifications and activities, particularly of a technical and scientific nature. UNICEF's work relied on the existing structures of Christian orphanages, schools, and hospitals and on informal networks of cooperation. It also built on the previous construction of needs. By 1952 UNICEF began to give priority to fighting disease, shifting away from its earlier focus on nutrition. Shankar identified the principal means by which UNICEF established itself in Africa in the construction of Africa as a continent of disease, which built on previous leprosy missions, and its emphasis on medical science. The late 1940s and the 1950s proved a major turning point in humanitarian relief before the formal end of colonialism.

In the wider context of international relations in the 1950s and 1960s, the example of the Franco-Algerian war exemplifies the emergence of an international humanitarian regime at the intersection between the Cold War and decolonization. Young-sun Hong (Harvard University/State University of New York, Stony Brook) argued that the architecture of the post-war humanitarian regime was determined by the domestic and geopolitical needs of the Western powers. The 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1951 UN Refugee Convention as well as cultural and racial beliefs in Western superiority and continued civilizing mission buffered structural blindness to the humanitarian dimensions of de-colonization. A case in point was the struggle over assistance during the Franco-Algerian war (1954–62). Hong compared the debate about aid to refugees in Northern Africa with the assistance given to Hungarians fleeing the Soviet invasion in 1956 and the disregard for international law during the Suez crisis. Ideologically determined inequalities and the instrumental use of humanitarian aid for other purposes by the French authorities in Algeria thus became apparent. This was mirrored by another less than selfless practical commitment to solidarity with the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) on the part of the Soviet Union and its allies. The conflict waged in terms of aid was made more complicated by divergent aims within both blocs and among Third World countries, and by the interactive process in which, over the years, 'donors' competed with each other, often disappointing the 'beneficiaries'. As a result, expected political benefits were often not achieved.

The Nigerian–Biafran war has long been regarded as a key event in the history of humanitarian aid. Konrad Kuhn (University of Zurich) analysed its impact along with the protests against the building of the Cahora Bassa dam in colonial Mozambique a few years later. He regarded the discussion on both incidents as part of a general search for new forms of politics in the late 1960s. Protests and activities in the global North were closely linked with events and perceptions of the global South. The famine in the secessionist province of Biafra stirred public opinion in many Western countries when images of starving children were used in a deliberate propaganda effort by Biafra's almost defeated military leadership. A multitude of action groups emerged, especially among students, doctors, and the churches. The appeal in the West was based on general humanitarian grounds but also on the fact that the Biafran Ibo were Christian, while the government was dominated by the Muslim Hausa. Support for Biafra was rarely explicitly political. By contrast, protests against the building of the Cahora Bassa dam were political from the start. The hydro-electric plant was part of a larger development plan to bolster Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique. Protest movements emerged in several European countries, especially in 1969–70. Declaring solidarity with the liberation movement FRELIMO, the Western groups denounced governments for their cooperation in granting export loans and guarantees, and banks and large engineering corporations such as Siemens for upholding late colonialism. Information spread among Western initiatives, and between FRELIMO and its European supporters, thus opening an avenue of communication which had not been available before. In a way, the dam project thus also proved a valuable propaganda object for its opponents. The two cases of Biafra and Cahora Bassa illustrate the different ways in which social movements in Europe and North America analysed, constructed, and contested humanitarianism in the context of a global North and South.

While Biafra created lasting images of starvation in Africa, Cahora Bassa politicized economic and political relations with the 'Third World' and was seen as a concrete example of imperialism and dependency theory. Florian Hannig (University of Halle-Wittenberg) explained how relief measures could themselves become politicized. A cyclone hit the shores of East Pakistan in November 1970; shortly thereafter, tensions between East and West Pakistan culminated in a

civil war and the eastern part declared its independence as Bangladesh. By the end of the year 10 million people had fled to India while another 30 million were displaced within Bangladesh. Despite international pressure, Islamabad declared the war to be an internal matter and refused access to humanitarian groups. Omega, a radical non-governmental group, undercut this by deliberately blurring the distinction between humanitarianism and politics which other organizations accepted. Their urge to act was based on a simplified view of the complexities and an interpretation of the crisis in terms of a 'David v. Goliath' narrative. This perception rested on lessons which members of the group thought they had learnt from the Nigerian–Biafran War. Operation Omega combined traditional relief measures with symbolic politics. One team was sent across the border to distribute aid, while a second team, equipped with token relief supplies, staged a sit-in inside Bangladesh, and had itself arrested in August 1971. Foreign governments and media had been informed in advance. Humanitarian relief missions themselves, Hannig argued, thus became a means of political communication. The small operation undertaken by Omega may therefore be seen as one example of new forms of political participation in the 1970s, which aimed to change the public agenda by using media events to mobilize protest against traditional patterns of politics in the name of wider, fundamental aims.

The refugee crisis of the late 1970s and 1980s in South-East Asia led to confrontations between established and new forms of humanitarian aid which were played out between competing organizations. Michael Vössing (University of Mannheim) looked at relations between the West German Red Cross Society and the Committee Cap Anamur, founded in 1979 by the journalist Rupert Neudeck, inspired by Bernard Kouchner, André Gluckmann, and the French rescue ship *Ile de Lumière*. The leading figures of the Red Cross and Cap Anamur clashed at home. Both organizations created a public image of themselves by denigrating the other. This appeared to be a conflict between an established, neutral organization close to state and government on the one hand, and a committed, flexible newcomer based on civic support on the other. The clash can be explained by the competition, first, over government support—diplomatic, organizational, and partly financial—and, secondly, over funding through public campaigns. The West German public, however, was apparently concerned less

about the organizational struggle than whether 'Asian' refugees should be brought into Germany. The Secretary-General of the Red Cross published several newspaper articles in 1980–1 demanding strict limits on immigration through the 'humanitarian' backdoor. Vössing showed that a remarkable number of people felt impelled to protest against Red Cross collections in writing because they opposed immigration, notwithstanding that the Red Cross, unlike Cap Anamur, did not ship Vietnamese refugees to West Germany, but provided aid on the spot in Asia. The West German conflicts in general illustrate that the dividing line between old and new, state and non-state actors was not clear-cut and less important than governance between several agents.

Dilemmas of Global Humanitarianism

Internationally, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), officially founded in 1971, is generally regarded as the hallmark of a new paradigm of international humanitarianism. Set against the dominance of the 'conservative' Red Cross, it has been portrayed as more engaged, more outspoken, and more willing to use the media and public opinion for its humanitarian purposes. The foundation myth relates to the experience of the Biafran war when a group of committed doctors broke with the ICRC policy of confidentiality and discretion. The act of 'witnessing' (*témoignage*) therefore became a key feature. Looking at neglected aspects of the origins of MSF, Michal Givoni (University of California, Berkeley) re-investigated the advent of the 'expert witness' and the role of ethical reflexivity in humanitarian governance up to the 1990s. In addition to the 'Biafran' doctors, a second group of physicians was involved in the foundation of MSF. At the core of their initiative was medical ethical responsibility, which they saw as endangered by an increasingly bureaucratic, commercialized, and technical approach to medicine. Givoni argued that relief missions in the third world offered an opportunity for a genuine re-enchantment of the profession. Accordingly, in its first years MSF served as a placement agency, matching development and humanitarian organizations with French doctors willing to spend some time in the Third World. *Témoignage*, for the most part, remained a personal act; only with the MSF protest against the misuse of humanitarian aid in

Ethiopia in 1985 and its withdrawal, for similar reasons, from Hutu refugee camps after the Rwanda genocide in 1994, did *témoignage* become reflexive and transform the cultivation of subjectivity by individual experts into a mode mobilizing private experts as a prime resource for the deployment of efficient political power on a global scale. *Témoignage* was a mechanism for translating moral claims into political action and vice versa. It changed relations between the humanitarian and the political, bringing them closer together while still keeping them apart.

Historical research on humanitarian aid has focused on organizations, politics, and discourses. The anthropologist Eva Spies (University of Mainz) changed the perspective by looking at the intercultural configuration in which European development workers find themselves on the spot. She analysed the situation in terms of intercultural encounters. The resulting dilemmas can be described using the notion of 'participating development'. In practice, a 'participatory' mode results in a conundrum for those who try to follow it because it contains conflicting demands. 'Participation' proves to be an ambiguous concept; differences need to be accepted and used as an asset for sustained development while it also appears necessary to minimize differences in order to facilitate the process. Men and women on the spot cope with the dilemma in several different ways. One is to seek a consensus with locals. Despite best intentions, this often results in disputes because local counterparts appear not to accept the 'Western' mode of establishing consensus. Instead, they adopt a mode of situational negotiation of interests trying not to let the opposite partner gain advantage over them. Other ways of coping with the participatory dilemma are to withdraw from contacts or reduce them to a necessary minimum, muddling through, and cynicism. The pitfalls of 'participatory development' illustrate that everyday problems of interpersonal and interculturapl interaction help in the understanding of general problems of development aid.

In emergencies similar issues arise from intercultural encounters, but they are even more pressing compared to those in development. While standards for the improvement of humanitarian aid are constantly under review, very few aid workers benefit from training. Anicée van Engeland (University of Exeter) discussed the dilemmas faced when international guidelines need to be applied in different cultural contexts. The case of Islam illustrates the difficulty of adapt-

ing humanitarian response tools to a particular religious or cultural system. The pressing nature of an emergency often allows little time to adapt to local contexts. Humanitarian organizations have responded differently to the dilemma. The ICRC provides advance cultural training for its aid workers; Médecins sans Frontières hires consultants for debriefing. Others consider the urgency of helping more important than the local context and make no special provisions. Van Engeland, who has been a consultant for humanitarian organizations, explained how the delivery of medical support can actually improve if aid workers take local contexts properly into consideration.

Several Asian countries have changed their position from aid recipients to aid providers in the past decades. Alain Guilloux (City University Hong Kong), a former board member and CEO of MSF, asked why most Asian countries were reluctant to endorse the post-Second World War humanitarian order. He argued that this was the legacy of colonialism, the Western dominance of the United Nations Organization, the Cold War, interventionism, and, finally, the distribution and balance of power between the middle powers and frustrated great powers in Asia. Another crucial period in the history of humanitarian governance began with the end of the Cold War. This period has been characterized by reduced protection for internal refugees and war victims. Further, the regional security arrangements of the Cold War have not been replaced by new ones, and no adequate regional institutions have been developed to respond to either natural or man-made disasters. Guilloux contended that this apparent reluctance may well be broken down in future by democratization and economic development in Asian countries. If countries such as China see their trade interests endangered by instability caused by humanitarian disasters such as that in the Horn of Africa, giving aid in some form may be a rational option.

More recent changes in satellite TV, global all-news networks, and the internet have radically altered the number and character of international actors engaged in humanitarian aid. Eytan Gilboa (Bar-Ilan Unversity and University of Southern California) systematically explored the role of the media from a historical and theoretical perspective. On the one hand, the media routinely covers major crises and disasters. On the other, journalists and news organizations intervene by organizing campaigns, usually for humanitarian aid. Media coverage and intervention therefore present journalists and editors

with a professional dilemma if they wish to adhere to norms such as balanced, fair, and neutral reporting. In a theoretical perspective, recent changes in the role of the media in humanitarian aid have been analysed by using concepts drawn from international relations and communications studies. These include the concept of 'soft power', that is, the pursuit of power politics by humanitarianism, the so-called 'CNN effect', which holds that pictures of humanitarian disasters force governments into action, and, finally, 'framing' theory, used to analyse the discourse 'battles' among aid organizations, governments, and victims' representatives over the legitimacy and usefulness of international humanitarian aid. These three approaches, Gilboa concluded, need to be critically applied so that they yield historical insights and improve theoretical concepts for the changing role of media in humanitarian aid.

Concluding the conference, Johannes Paulmann identified essential dilemmas, inherent or apparent, in the idea and practice of international humanitarian aid, which have shaped the field since the beginning of the twentieth century. (1) *Spectatorship and Agency*. The distance of those who suffer carried inherent tensions. It determined the capacity of those who watched others suffer to help, and it opened a fundamental gap between spectatorship and agency. (2) *Media Intervention*. Distance resulted in the construction of similarities and/or otherness. There was a need to translate between abstract universalism and local peculiarities. Media intervention has therefore always been a basic feature of humanitarian action, although relations with the aid agencies varied at specific times. (3) *The Politics of Empathy*. Narratives of suffering and relief often focused on events and actions. As a consequence of an alarmist and dramatized picture the political or structural causes of suffering were often left out. Human empathy appeared in the foreground and was used by some of the political actors in disasters, so that we can speak of the politics of empathy. (4) *Humanitarian Aid as Politics*. Humanitarian aid was often used as an instrument to achieve other ends. In foreign aid it became an instrument of foreign policy. It was also part of some governments' economic policy because aid products such as food helped their own producers. Domestic politics in donor and receiving countries determined the size, timing, and geography of aid, while international relations affected who helped, to what extent, and for how long. Humanitarian aid as politics also touched on the fundamental

question of the relationship between civil society and the state. (5) *The Politics of Aid*. As a result of proliferation and competition, aid organizations pursued their own politics. One basic feature was the relationship between the international dimension of aid and the national aid structures in donor countries. Multi-layered systems of humanitarian aid existed and we need to ask how the aid polity developed over time nationally and internationally, for example, through the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization. Another factor was the competition between NGOs over funds, access, and publicity. (6) *Outside Intervention and Local Coping Mechanisms*. A final dilemma pertained to the relationship between donors and beneficiaries. What were the effects of moral, economic, political, military, or cultural interventions on the existing coping mechanisms of societies struck by disaster? Negative results were, for example, the prolongation of war and support for authoritarian regimes. Humanitarian aid, on the other hand, also strengthened the agency of the beneficiaries individually and, in some cases, collectively.

Overall, the conference explored the history of humanitarian aid in a polycentric, multi-layered manner from the point of view of Europe and the West, from the colonies and the Third World, and from local/national and international perspectives, revealing uneven development and contingencies of change. Emphasis was put on the coming together of different forces, events, and structures at particular times explaining the dilemmas faced by humanitarian aid to the present day.

JOHANNES PAULMANN (Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz)