



Designing the model European—Liberal and republican concepts of citizenship in Europe in the 1860s: The *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales*

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ABSTRACT

The formation of citizenship as a concept to define the rights of participation in the formation processes of modern territorial states is well known. But the transnational dimensions of defining citizenship and how to combine national legislations with enlightened universal and natural law rules in the mid-19th century is not very well known. The article aims to explore the transnational discourses on the political, economic and moral rights and duties of the citizen in the pan-European liberal *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales*. During the 1860s, its congresses should serve as a vast commission of enquiry and should eventually lead to a general definition of citizenship in Europe which could be implemented in national legislations. The article shows how the *Association Internationale* tried to deduce universal moral rules from national legislations and peculiarities by the means of moral or positive social science. In combining moral unity with national and regional diversities, the *Association Internationale* tried to give an elastic framework for a European civil society in which national subjects should become active citizens.

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‘No one will keep us from founding the United States of Europe.’¹ In 1864, the French publicist Ernest Desmarest² staged the quest for homogenous definitions of liberal – republican citizen rights and duties on the platform of the pan-European *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales* (or International Social Science Association, ISSA).³ Drafted as a forum to rally liberal

and republican forces and existing transnational specialist associations from Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Switzerland, Italy and some federal states in Germany, the ISSA should initially serve as a vast commission of enquiry in order to influence public opinion, to discuss and prepare legislative action and finally determine government legislations for a future Union of European Nations.⁴ Following a Comtean ideal, Desmarest and his fellow associates thought that a transnational elite association with annual congresses could discuss and determine not only the rights and qualities but also the limits of citizenship in Europe. The objective of the ISSA was to organise reformists from all over Europe.

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¹ *Annales de l'Association pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales*, vol. II (Brussels, Paris, Leipzig, 1864), 107. Sources and references are provided only to support the argument, but do not aspire to be complete.

² Ernest Desmarest (1815–1893), in: *Dictionnaire de Biographies Françaises*, X, 1438–9.

³ A comprehensive account of the ISSA is still much to be desired. Despite its vital importance the ISSA is still missing in scholarly works and handbooks, as in some of the latest accounts: Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865. Eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung* (Darmstadt, 2009). For an overview see Lawrence Goldman, *Science, Reform, and Politics in Victorian Britain. The Social Science Association 1857–1886* (Cambridge, 2002), 1–20, 325–6; Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations. The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870–1960* (Cambridge, 2001), 11–42; Martti Koskenniemi, ‘Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns and the Establishment of the Institut de Droit International (1873)’, *Revue Belge de Droit International*, 37, 1 (2004), 5–11; Christian Müller, ‘The Politics of Expertise. The Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales, Democratic Peace Movements, and International Law Networks in Europe, 1858–1875’, *Shaping the transnational sphere. Experts, networks, and issues (c.1850–1930)*, ed. Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck, Jakob Vogel (Berghahn: Oxford-New York, forthcoming).

⁴ In this essay, liberal and republican are not defined by their adherence to certain constitutional paradigms, but as different creeds with regard to political involvement of the people and public opinion. The origins of the idea to convince public opinion within the European states to support expert politics and their popularised findings can be traced at least until the re-formation of international organizations after the peace-movement crises during the Crimean War in 1856. See e.g. W.G. Lumley, ‘Report on the Proceedings of the International Congress de Bienfaisance, held at Brussels, Sept. 1856’, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 19, 4 (Dec. 1856), 385–9, 388–9; Henry Roberts, ‘Report on the Proceedings of the Congrès International de Bienfaisance held in Frankfurt/Main, Sept. 1857’, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 21, 3 (Sep. 1858), 339–44, 341; Michel Corr van de [sic!] Maeren, ‘On the Progress of Free Trade on the Continent’, *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 21, 4 (Dec. 1858), 457–9.

The ISSA used modern techniques of expanding railway networks,⁵ steamships, and the telegraph to convene and stage associations and congresses from the mid-1850s until its sudden death in 1866/1867.⁶ The membership lists only counted some hundreds or roughly a thousand at the association's peak time in 1864, and even fewer of them agitated publicly. However, all of them saw themselves as a progressive avant-garde, hoping that the congress discussions and press coverage would eventually push public opinions in Europe to adopt a more active and inclusive definition of citizenship. The majority of the ISSA members aimed at achieving this goal by harmonizing national legislations on economic, political and social questions and issues, thus providing universal rules for a European civil society in which national subjects would become active citizens. In adapting Giambattista Vico's enlightenment ideas to nineteenth-century nationalism, the ISSA argued that comparative legislative efforts should not lead to a uniformity of regulations, but only to conformity of legal and political principles or universals with which to specify national regulations.⁷ In this process, the ISSA should form a guiding ideal to 'ordinary' citizens across national boundaries.

Citizenship and transnational history

This article presents the argument that discussions on citizenship in European transnational associations and congresses in the 1860s genuinely reflected national liberal and republican concepts of how societies should be organised in the future, and which rights and duties would render men into active citizens. The 1860s can be seen as specifically open and formative in transformations of politics, and one might consider this decade as the watershed of modernity dawning on sub-national, national and transnational levels.⁸ Democratization and parliamentarisation processes, constitutional and representational reforms, as well as social, economic and legal problems were addressed, and contemporaries laid out diverse roads of progress towards a future European society still to be taken. This is especially true for the formation of transnational spaces, associations, and networks both governmental and non-governmental in organisation, influence and scope.⁹ Such transnational spaces and their contributions can serve as prisms to break up the diffuse light of relations between regional, national and inter- or transnational concepts and ideas into lucid rays which are more concise to analyse.

It is well known that normative universalisation was among the key processes of European politics in the 19th century, both in

interstate relations and the emergence of a modern public international law, and in the growing activities of international non-governmental and governmental organizations.¹⁰ While this can be argued for the statistical and other scientific or technical congress movements, the international social science movement runs counter to this trend. Until the late 1860s, this movement tried to bridge the antagonism of universalisation and normative uniformisation on the one hand and diversity and pluralism on the other hand by bringing together the two extremes in a coherent approach.¹¹

The ISSA discussions serve as a model and experimental phase in which unity in diversity should be established by finding universal principles and specific national adaptations within these principles. Transnational associations and congress movements were not just a weak extension of an American special path to modernity, but genuinely a movement which transcended Europe and Latin America as well as the Australasian region.¹² In this sense, transnational movements looking for a pan-European harmonization of legal principles and citizenship universals also have to be interpreted in the light of post-colonial discourse. Enlightenment ideals in the 1860s were transformed both nationally and transnationally to come to terms with the dichotomy of uniformity and diversity. This transformation was also reflected and highlighted by the political opposition to the future colonizing elites within Europe.

Historical and political research on modern citizenship in the last decade has focused on its political, economic, and social aspects mainly with reference to defining the nation. Citizenship concepts were interpreted as means of both inclusion into and exclusion from the political nation.¹³ Therefore, associations, networks and organizations with a strong international bias or a genuinely transnational character as actors and spaces of political discourse have rather been neglected, unless they were connected to working-class internationalism.¹⁴ These associations and congresses serve as ideal prisms and indicators for studying political concepts and their transformations into practice. In transcending the national spheres at congress and associational meetings, the participants were almost forced to define the very concepts which they wanted to discuss or alter. Especially the

¹⁰ 'The movement of associations and scientific congresses ever more expands to a general phenomenon.' *Indépendance Belge* 123, 3 May 1864. For the interaction between INGOs and IGOs see Osterhammel, *Verwandlung der Welt*, 731–3; Madeleine Herren, *Hintertüren zur Macht. Internationalismus und modernisierung-sorientierte Außenpolitik in Belgien, der Schweiz und den USA 1865–1914* (Munich, 2000), 1 and ch. II on Belgium; Craig N. Murphy, *International Organizations and Industrial Change. Global Governance since 1850* (Cambridge, 1994), 47–8.

¹¹ In this sense, the ISSA was already part of a modern concept of internationalism which in 1908 Alfred H. Fried thought to be a product of progress and modernity of the last 20–30 years. Both Koskenniemi and Røben are misleading when they attribute this concept of internationalism (or the German concept 'Internationalität' as proposed by Johann Caspar Bluntschli) to the 'Revue de Droit International' and the 'Institut de Droit International' from 1869 onwards. See Alfred H. Fried, *Das internationale Leben der Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1908), 28–31; Koskenniemi, *Gentle Civilizer*, 13; Betsy Røben, *Johann Caspar Bluntschli, Francis Lieber und das moderne Völkerrecht, 1861–1881* (Baden-Baden, 2002), 154–6.

¹² Goldman, *Science*, 312–48; Lawrence Goldman, 'The Social Science Association, 1857–1886: a context for mid-Victorian Liberalism', *EHR* 100 (1986), 95–134; Lawrence Goldman, 'A Peculiarity of the English? The Social Science Association and the Absence of Sociology in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Past and Present* 113 (1987), 133–171, 148–70. For a different view see Akira Iriye, 'A Century of NGOs', *Diplomatic History* 23, 3 (1999), 421–35.

¹³ Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship. The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, London, 2007), 3–8, and chs. 1 and 2. The legal definition was already dominant in the 1860s, e.g. Johann Caspar Bluntschli, 'De la qualité de citoyen d'un état au point de vue des relations internationales', *Revue de Droit International* 2 (1870), 107–20 (dealing with citizenship in the legal quality of the German *Staatsangehörigkeit*).

¹⁴ For an overview still useful: Miklós Molnár, 'Internationalismus', *Sowjetsystem und Demokratische Gesellschaft* (Freiburg, 1969), III, 265–91. Lyons, *Internationalism*, and Osterhammel, *Verwandlung der Welt*, still also emphasise the overall importance of the working-class international as genuinely transnational, while bourgeois INGOs in the age of nationalism are always suspicious of an 'internationalism for the benefit of the nation.' Fried, *internationale Leben*, V, 31.

⁵ The ISSA managed or at least tried to provide for their members 50% discount on all major railways from London to the Channel ports, on the main Northern lines from Paris to Belgium, and on the main routes from the Netherlands and the Rhineland to the congress cities. *Indépendance Belge* 261, 18 Sept. 1862 and 260, 16 Sept. 1864; *Le Temps* (Paris), 30 Sept. 1864.

⁶ See C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World. Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, 2004), 307–15; J. A. Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason. European Thought, 1848–1914* (New Haven, London, 2000), 11, 33; Koskenniemi, *Gentle Civilizer*, 23, 29; Christopher Kent, *Brains and Numbers: Elitism, Comtism, and Democracy in Mid-Victorian England* (Toronto/Buffalo/London, 1978), 43–8, 79; T. R. Wright, *The Religion of Humanity. The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain* (Cambridge, 1986), 40–50.

⁷ Giambattista Vico, *La scienza nuova* (Milano, 1977), 179; Emerico Amari, *Critica di una scienza delle legislazioni comparate* (Palermo, 1857, reprint 1969), vol. I, 105; vol. II, 158–61, 170–1, 207–9.

⁸ For Germany and Western Europe, this argument has recently been proposed in: John Breuilly, Ronald Speirs, 'The Concept of National Unification', in: *Germany's Two Unifications. Anticipations, Experiences, Responses*, ed. Ronald Speirs, John Breuilly (Basingstoke, 2005), 1–25, 6–11 and 19–22; David Blackburn, James Retallack, 'Introduction', in: *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place. German-Speaking Central Europe, 1860–1930*, ed. David Blackburn, James Retallack (Toronto/Buffalo/London, 2007), 3–38, 4–14.

⁹ F. S. L. Lyons, *Internationalism in Europe 1815–1914* (Leyden, 1963), 13–4; Osterhammel, *Verwandlung der Welt*, 723–4; Herren, *Internationale Organisationen*, 1–3, 11 with further references.

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