

EUTOPIA ColeCo Legal History: Connectedness in Legal History



As the train left a rather gloomy Leamington Spa, we were relishing the prospect of arriving in bustling Brussels the same day. Having represented Warwick at the conference last year in Ljubljana, three of us were extremely excited to have once again the opportunity to present in front of a fantastic community. For Tom, on the other hand, this was a new experience but he for sure made the most of it having returned home with a pair of European Union sunglasses and a Belgian flag - but no chocolate!

Firstly, we would like to thank the students of Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Professor Frederik Dhondt for their excellent hospitality throughout the trip.

The conference was perfectly arranged and the tours of such a fascinating city were conducted with such thoroughness and precision that we now have a good understanding of the Hapsburg Empire. That being said, we are not the biggest fans of Leopold II!

Wednesday 13th March

Upon arrival in Brussels, our cohort was immediately thankful that it was not raining. Trying our best to not be stereotypically English, Mayukha's attempt at saying 'bonjour' to Belgian locals was very much in vain as everybody knew we were not the most fluent French or Dutch speakers. Nevertheless, Nia still managed to use her one Dutch word being 'bedankt' to which we all applauded sarcastically. Despite our mishaps language-wise, we took in the fascinating sights of Brussels which included the efficient Metro system and a questionable street of shops on the way back to the hotel. The day ended, for Mayukha and me, with a trip to Le Botanique to experience some live music by London-based artist Lord Apex. It is fair to say that the atmosphere for concerts in Belgium is unrivalled as we reflected on a great night out.

Thursday 14th March: The Peak Event

The picturesque view from the Mont des Arts on Thursday morning provided a perfect backdrop for the peak event. As Professor Doyle remarked before leaving Warwick, those who dress in suits for these events are usually the junior academics. It was clear that Mayukha and I got the message maybe a little bit too much! However, Tom certainly listened to our professor rocking the smart casual look.

Luckily for us, we had the honour of presenting first on the broad topic of connectedness within legal history. Credit goes to Nia for fantastically opening the event and providing a detailed insight on penal transportation between the United Kingdom and Australia. Next, it was my turn to talk about the legal vs socioeconomic debates surrounding the Italian *Risorgimento* whilst simultaneously losing an embarrassing battle with the technology. The warm reception from both Sultan and Maxime after however definitely reassured me. Tom's interest in Afro-Latin American legacies made for a unique presentation with a strong focus on the Brazilian perspective. Mayukha completed Warwick's global history tour by speaking about the impacts of Indian indenture which he had researched so well in depth.

Friday 15th March

The only disappointment felt at the House of European History was because Frederik was not our tour guide! Covering a huge range of history the museum visually displayed so many artefacts

with huge cultural significance. Being in a museum, we made several references to the hypocrisy of the 'British' Museum with its 'Greek' marbles and 'Egyptian' mummies. I was particularly intrigued to find a surviving 'Fragebogen' questionnaire issued in Germany after the fall of the Nazis. The highlight however was Teja's excitement shown at the car exhibit with a Slovenian number plate and yes, both Tom and I decided to get in the car like the ten-year-old children we are (sorry Rosie)! An honourable mention goes to Nia who really struggled with how to operate a lift which was rather amusing.

The tour of the European Union centres that ensued made us rather jealous considering the horrors of the Brexit Referendum in 2016. However, I am sure that Tom's stylish sunglasses would certainly qualify him for an EU passport in the future. With the summit closing at the picturesque VUB campus, we all reflected on another fantastic experience. As we sat down for lunch, Sultan's jokes about Mayukha and I will certainly not be forgotten. We were also extremely happy to get a picture with the albeit reluctant Frederik himself who made sure the event ran so smoothly. Despite some terrible outtakes, my attempts to capture some footage for the Warwick History Hour Podcast will hopefully be uploaded on Spotify at some point in the near future. Having an episode on the EUTOPIA community will be a fantastic way to showcase the connectedness between our European universities.

Our last evening in Brussels was wonderful but only because of the excellent suggestions made by Lentl and Manon. That cherry beer was one of the best we had ever tasted as was the (hopefully) Belgian waffle. Getting to know everyone that evening was a pleasure and we all cannot wait to welcome everyone to Warwick next year.

Warwick Presentations Summarised

NIA BELCHER: Penal Transportation in the Nineteenth-Century: Britain and Australia



This was my second year participating in the EUTOPIA Connected Learning Community, but the first time I was able to attend the peak event in person. Presenting my work-in-progress to other students, as well as the academics in attendance has proven valuable when considering where I should next move with my research. This is especially relevant considering my background as a history student

researching an aspect of legal history compared to the majority in attendance who hailed from the law faculty. Those in attendance suggested different ways to approach my further research, such as focusing on jurists like Cesare Beccaria in addition to the historiographical perspectives I included in my presentation. In addition to the impact that this feedback will have on my blog post for this project, the experience that this event provided in presenting my research has made me more confident in my public speaking abilities. It was interesting to consider when putting together my presentation how it would need to be altered when talking to an expert vs non-expert audience. Therefore, attending the peak event and receiving feedback on my research as well as interacting with other students has had a positive impact.

ASH FOWKES-GAJAN: The *Risorgimento* as a Fragmented Paradigm: Was Italy, by 1871, any more than a 'mere geographical expression'?

The Italian struggle for unification was often romanticised in its immediate aftermath. However, the newly formed nation state was less threatened externally at the expense of internal divisions.

Aligning with scholars within the historiographical field of 'history from below', the presentation sought to outline how culturally the 'Risorgimento' was a term championed by intellectuals who resonated to a restricted literate audience. In turn, the lives of the ordinary Italians and their experiences, once neglected, have recently been granted more human agency. Legal considerations surrounding the 'Risorgimento' have posed several questions on the nature of unification. Was Italy becoming an enlarged Piedmont (through the means of a forced plebiscite accepting the laws of one singular state)? The united Italy would also accept the debt of all the sovereign states of the nation combined. Therefore, debts from the industrially ambitious North would be in part repaid by the poverty stricken South. Coinciding with the rise of Italian patriotism was the decline of Papal authority in the region which resulted in nations with 'liberal' sentiment recognising Italy as a singular entity. This factor, alongside positive trading opportunities, was central to the Belgian decision. From the legal perspective, Italy appears to be free from international conflict and its central political figures Victor Emmanuel II and Count Cavour satisfied. However, where the spirit of Garibaldi haunted the newly formed state was through matters internally. Socio-economic unrest in the south of Italy, over their neglect, resulted in a Brigands War and the imposition of martial law fulfilled by the newly formed national army. As historians, this narrative attempts to overcome the methodological issues associated with a traditionalist approach to the 'Risorgimento' focused upon 'great men' and grand narratives. However, can the lives of ordinary Italians be fully recovered by the historian who's access to archival material is dominated by the literate elite and self interested politicians?

TOM POSNIC-BOYCE: Afro-Latin American Legacies



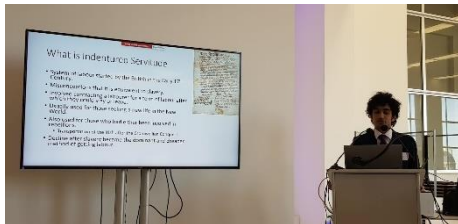
As a first-year student, I have the pleasure to be able to take the Latin America Themes and Problems module which Rosie lectures on-alongside several other expert historians on the region- as well as being my seminar tutor. When I was told that the theme of the presentations this year was interconnectedness I thought about what I had learned whilst doing this module and decided on creating a presentation focussed on the links and legacies between Africa and Latin America. I opened my presentation talking about why the links

between the two regions of the world even have any links which is because of the transatlantic slave trade with millions of enslaved people being forcibly transported and forced to work, for example on sugar plantations, in terrible conditions. I explained how most of these enslaved people arrived and worked in Brazil showing that African legacies in the region would manifest the strongest in Brazil. This set my focus for the rest of the presentation. I then went on to discuss the cultural contributions that African people and their descendants have had in Latin America which included Samba which is a very popular Brazilian musical genre and dance style with its roots in African religious traditions. After this, I moved onto some of the Afro-Latin Americans who have had huge impacts on society. I discussed how Pele, who had Angolan and Nigerian ancestors, was an example to poor African-descended Brazilians that they too could get out of their poverty and achieve something extraordinary which Pele did by winning 3 world cups, a record that nobody has surpassed since. To round off the presentation I discussed negative legacies in the region with inequality between races being extremely prevalent in Brazil with a majority of the population in Favelas being mixed race or black, not white, demonstrating how not all Afro-Latin American legacies



are positive ones and how these legacies are still prevalent in the present day. I then had a question from Rosie Doyle about the government's role in these legacies of inequality and to answer I talked about how racism is not acknowledged as the big issue that it actually is in Brazil. I mentioned the 'whitening' policies adopted by Latin American governments, after the abolition of slavery, to only allow European and Asian immigrants into the countries to try and make the country more 'civilized' showing the state's role in perpetuating racial inequalities which persist to this day.

MAYUKHA RODRIGO: Indian Indenture and its Effect on Modern Demographics and Politics



Indian Indenture is an often under-discussed part of British colonialism with the most discussed often being slavery, the Bengal famine and the partition of India. Therefore, in this presentation I decided to focus on this subject. Since this year's subject was connectedness, I focussed on the political and demographic effects of indenture, as well as similarities in issues faced by

Indians who were transported. I started by focussing on the difference between indentured servitude and slavery. This was particularly important due to the perpetuation of the 'Irish Slaves' or 'Indian Slaves' myths, common among those who seek to diminish the experience of African slaves. I then illustrated the different outcomes of those who had been transported for agricultural reasons and those who had been transported to build infrastructure with the latter often richer and more influential than the former. In particular, I focussed on the difference between East African Indians and Fiji and Guyanese Indians. I then focussed on the political aspects including the long running Sri Lankan Civil War, the deposing of Cheddi Jagan in Guyana and Mahendra Chowdry in Fiji, and the rise of British Indian politicians in the UK, since many of the senior British Indian politicians are descended from labourers in East Africa. Therefore, I showed that Indian Indenture had led to much demographic and political change.

The succeeding talks, from students of the other universities, were fascinating and engaging. The Slovenian presentations were of the highest quality regarding the connectedness of the empire and more importantly the regions within Slovenia itself. Presenting on the impact of Styrian hops, the immaculately dressed Lovro chose a fascinating topic question we all certainly resonated with (even if Belgian cherry beer tasted like 'juice' for him)! Political mobilisation from above and below was excellently covered by Vida and Teja who both demonstrated the ability to link local-level matters to broader, national circumstances. Finally, Ajra's talk on credit unions highlighted how specific connectedness within Slovenia differed from union activity overseas.

Comparisons can certainly be drawn between Nia's presentation and Sabrina's asserted focus on the abolition of the death penalty - in particular the power of the prison as an institution itself. We also thought that both Maeve and Lentl's brilliant presentations successfully interpreted the feminist struggle in both France and Belgium and we were interested in the ways these movements differed from the English example of the suffragettes and suffragist movements. Despite both Sultan and Dribardh humbly playing themselves down before their talks, we were all intrigued at the detail in which both addressed the Ostend Company and governance amongst the Austrian Low Countries respectively. Cheyenne's presentation with Dribardh was so good that they did not have any questions asked - much to her relief it must be said! From the Habsburg's broadly to the emperor himself, Maxime's thorough analysis of Joseph II accurately summarised his role as not only a leader but also as a symbolic presence across borders.

As history students, colonial societies have been an ongoing imperative focus for study. Given that Mayukha (Sri Lanka) and I (Guyana) have ex-British colonial heritage ourselves, the keynote talk given by Professor da Silva and Manon's interaction with the Belgian Congo Free State embellished not only our historical but also our legal knowledge. As historians, we appreciated the intersectionality approach taken by both as they investigated legal consequences through the separate lenses of both race and class.

We would all like to massively thank all of the professors for asking very useful questions and providing us with essential feedback for the development of our projects. I will certainly attempt to learn Italian in order to understand some Mancini!

Ash Fowkes-Gajan
Mayukha Rodrigo
Nia Belcher
Tom Posnic-Boyce