

# EuParl.net Newsletter

**EU  
PARL  
NET**

European Information and  
Research Network on  
Parliamentary History

Winter 2019/2020

## Dear readers,

*At the turn of the decade, the dilemmas of legality and legitimacy vis-à-vis political tactics and brutal power seem to attack us from ever more surprising contexts. The Polish parliament and its midnight votes, and Prime Minister Johnson's attempt to exclude the House of Commons from the Autumn's Brexit season seem to be overshadowed by the current crisis in the Middle East.*

*Undemocratic, but formally lawful steps seem to be replaced by the confrontation of the legality represented by national borders and institutions on the one hand, and the globalized political strategy and power on the other. May a democratic superpower kill enemies on foreign territory? And will the legitimate Iraqi Parliament be strong enough to have a say?*

*This newsletter comes with a few reading suggestions, both traditional and online, that might help us all consider the current democratic challenges, yet keep a healthy mind.*

*May you have successful, intellectually stimulating and peaceful 2020s!*

*Yours Adéla Gjuričová*



*The EuParl.net Board of Directors held its meeting in Prague on 11 October 2019. The Board discussed the input from member organizations, their plans for the coming years, as well as the network publishing strategy. The Board decided to launch a new series of workshops entitled "Parliamentarism as a Political Idea". It will kick off in Ljubljana in April 2020, where the role of parliamentary ideals will be scrutinized within the context of the first free elections held in 1990 by a number of post-Communist countries.*

*The meeting was held in the former Federal Assembly of Czechoslovakia, now the New Building of the National Museum in Prague. Network colleagues joined in for a tour of the amazing building that dates back to the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. It was home to the institution that experienced dramatic transformation to democratic legislature in 1989/1990.*



*Protests at the Federal Assembly building, December 1989*



## NEWS

### Dutch CPG on Climate



The Dutch Centre for Parliamentary History (CPG) at Radboud University, Nijmegen, published its 21th Yearbook of Parliamentary History and presented it to Khadija

Arib and Jan Anthonie Bruijn, Presidents of the two parliamentary chambers on 19 November 2019. *Nature, Environment and Climate* explores the topics in both historical perspective – from the outset of the green movement, via the first environment ministry to current global climate accords – and in their parliamentary contexts. It has become a tradition to present the first copies of the Yearbook on the third Tuesday of November, referring to third Tuesday of September, the day on which, ever since the 19th century, the King’s Speech officially opens the parliamentary year in the Netherlands.

### Party Democracy in Crisis?

Inspired by the above question, a joint workshop of KGParl and the Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ) was held in Munich on 21–22 November 2019 under the title *Party Democracy in Crisis? Political Parties and Movements in Times of Social Change since 1970*.

Reflecting on the rise of populist movements, the electoral success of far-right groupings, and the collapse of traditional parties, the participants discussed the shift in claims for political representation and control from the mid-1970s onwards, including the effects of social pluralisation and value change for popular parties, the consequences of 1989 and German reunification for the German party landscape, as well as the challenges posed by populism and the debate on national identity. The workshop also focused on contemporary methods of party history and the need to go beyond the traditional history of organizations and include socio-economic, cultural and media aspects.

The event is part of the KGParl new research project Constitution and Development of Parties in the New German Lands, 1989–2005.

### On Ideal Parliament



We are delighted to inform you that *The Ideal of Parliament in Europe since 1800*, a volume that emerged from a EuParl.net workshop, is now out. Edited by Remieg Aerts, Carla van Baalen, Henk te Velde, Margit van der Steen and Marie-Luise Recker it is published by Palgrave Macmillan. The collection explores the perceptions and memories of parliamentarianism across Europe, examining the complex ideal since 1800. Parliament has become a prominent institution in modern democracy; and the chapters present its evolution.

The volume is divided into three sections. The establishment of parliament in the 19th century and the transfer of parliamentary ideals, models and practices, based on the British and French models, are outlined in the first section. The second part explores how the high expectations of parliamentary democracy in the newly-established states after WWI gradually subsided into dissatisfaction. Finally, the last section attests to the ideal of parliament and its power to incorporate criticism. The volume extends beyond the usual focus on Western Europe and includes other parts of the continent.



Marie-Luise Recker and Benedikt Wintgens presented their most recent books at a panel discussion in Bonn on 4 September 2019. Recker’s *Parliamentarism in the Federal Republic of Germany - The German Bundestag 1949–1969* portrays a self-confident parliament confronting the Chancellor and Cabinet, thus modifying the image of Germany as Chancellor democracy. Wintgens’ *Treibhaus Bonn, a fascinating reconstruction of a debate held over a parliamentary novel in 1953/54*, drew a multi-faceted picture of the transformation from the Third Reich to Federal Republic.



## PROJECTS

### Writing a New History of Parliament



The historian Paul Seaward, former Director of the History of Parliament Trust in London and member of EuParl.net Board of Directors received the British Academy / Wolfson Foundation Research Professorship that grants him three years of uninterrupted research. His *Reformation to Referendum* project should result in a new, thematic *History of Parliament*. We are keen to see the output of this splendid research endeavour! You can taste the first bits of his work in progress on his project blog <https://historyofparliamentblog.wordpress.com/>.

### German Research Goes Wiki



KGParl and Wikimedia Deutschland set up a joint working group that should seek professional cooperation especially within Wikidata and Wikimedia Commons. The pilot pro-

ject is expected to bring retro-digitalisation of biographical handbooks published in the series *Handbooks on the History of Parliamentarism and Political Parties*, which are no longer available. Once digitised, they will be accessible as Wikisource content. Moreover, the KGParl experts will assist Wikipedia activists when processing articles on history of parliamentarism and political parties.

## SAVE THE DATE

*Parliamentarism as a Political Idea: The Elections of 1990*. Workshop. **April 16–17, 2020**. Ljubljana.

*Chronopolitics. Time of Politics, Politics of Time, Politicized Time*. Conference. **May 14–16, 2020**. London

*The Free Elections of 1990*. Conference and exhibition of Dagmar Hochtová's photos. **May 21–22, 2020**. Prague.

## BOOKS/SOURCES

KOSS, Michael: *Parliaments in Time. The Evolution of Legislative Democracy in Western Europe, 1866–2015*. Oxford UP 2018

VIEIRA, Ryan A.: *Time and Politics: Parliament and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and the British World*. Oxford UP 2015

CREWE, Emma: *Commons and Lords. A short anthropology of Parliament*. London 2015

ILAHAINEN, Pasi: Internationalization and Democratization Interconnected: The Swedish and Finnish Parliaments Debating Membership in the League of Nations". *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 39 (1), 2019, pp. 11–31



GATZKA, Claudia C.: *Die Demokratie der Wähler. Stadtgesellschaft und politische Kommunikation in Italien und der Bundesrepublik 1944–1979*. Düsseldorf 2019.

RECKER, Marie-Luise: *Parlamentarismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Der Deutsche Bundestag 1949–1969*. Düsseldorf 2019.

*Contributions to Contemporary History* – check the online archives and the latest issue at <https://ojs.inz.si/pnz/issue/archive>

HARDMAN, Isabel: *Why We Get the Wrong Politicians*. London 2018

*The Daily Suffragist* on Twitter gives a concise daily snapshot from the history of the women's suffrage movement and notable women – <https://twitter.com/DailySuffragist>



## CONFERENCE REPORT

### 1989: Finally Alone?



Tomáš Zahradníček and Adéla Gjuričová presented the emancipation routes of the Czech and Slovak government institutions in the early 1990s.

Two-day workshop *Finally Alone: The Nation State, Representation, and Sovereignty in Central Europe after 1989* was held in Bratislava on 25–26 September 2019. Its sought to present a non-triumphalist story of the peaceful revolutions that brought Communist dictatorships in East–Central Europe to their end. In the workshop narrative, 1989 represented not only the beginning of liberal democratic transformations, but also a period of ethno-political claims, separatism, new borders and divisions. It was no coincidence that none of the three former Socialist federations – Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union – survived the early 1990s.

On the first conference day, the papers compared the respective institutional routes leading to the break-up of federal structures. Jure Gašparič analysed what the opinion polls tell us about the extent and the periods Slovenian people accepted the Yugoslav identity as



Keynote lecture by Darina Malová at Comenius University

their own. Adéla Gjuričová and Tomáš Zahradníček elaborated the Czech and Slovak cases, while Ivan Sablin added an outline of Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts to reform the Soviet federation. The papers, to be published as a special issue of the *Czech Journal of Contemporary History*, were accompanied by a panel discussion that brought together Czech and Slovak panellists: former key agents of the events, and members of the Federal Assembly and the National Councils in the early 1990s.

The Comenius University in Bratislava hosted the second conference day. It included keynote lecture by Darina Malová, along with analytical papers by Jiří Suk, Kristina Andělová, Adam Hudek, and Jaroslav Cuhra. They provided more detailed historical background for the Czechoslovak case. The workshop was an event organized jointly by the Czech Institute of Contemporary History, the Slovak Institute of History, the Czech Centre Bratislava, and Comenius University Political Science Department.

## ESSAY



On 8 March 1979, over 100,000 people gathered in Tehran to protest the new Islamic government hijab rule which required women to wear headscarf when outside their home. (Photo credit: Hengameh Golestan)