

UNESCO and the Cold War

Heidelberg University, 4-5 March, 2010.

From its very inception UNESCO was one of the forums, where East-West contest in the ideological sphere became most visible. For many years the Organization remained a hostage of Cold War confrontation, when both opposing blocs attempted to use it as an instrument in their war of ideas. On the other hand, the UNESCO that had been founded, as its Constitution declares, “for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the people of the world, the objective of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind,” played an important and not always appreciated part in alleviating contradictions between opposing Cold War blocs, seeking ways of mitigating the conflict between them by way of influencing people’s thinking and spreading ideas of peace and accommodation that could help eliminate the seeds of war in the minds of people.

The principal objective of the conference therefore is to study the influence that the Cold War exerted on UNESCO, its activities and evolution, as well as the impact that the organization, through its efforts in connecting peoples and countries in the sphere of culture, education and science, had left on confrontation between the countries divided by irreconcilable discrepancy of worldviews, interests and objectives in the international arena.

Format

Each session will begin with Commentators discussing the pre-circulated papers in relation to the general topic, after which the authors will respond, and then discussion will open up to the floor.

4 March, morning

9 am – 12.15 pm

Opening remarks:

Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO

Jean-François Sirinelli, Director of the Centre d’Histoire de Sciences Po, Paris, President of the International Scientific Committee for the UNESCO History Project

Detlef Junker, Founding Director of the Heidelberg Center for American Studies, Heidelberg University

Conference Introduction:

Robert Frank, Director of the UMR/IRICE, Member of the International Scientific Committee for the UNESCO History Project

Session 1: UNESCO and the Member States: In the Turmoil of Cold War Politics

CHAIR: Mohieddine Hadhri

Pre-circulated Papers:

“Japanese Relations with UNESCO under the Cold War” (*Liang Pan*, Assistant Professor of International Relations, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba. Japan)

“La Bulgarie et l’UNESCO pendant la Guerre froide” (*Mariana Lecheva*, Department Head, State Agency « Archives », Bulgaria)

“The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (1957-1980)” (*Andrew Young*, Military Historian, Ottawa, Canada)

“La Hongrie, membre de l’UNESCO: son admission et ses activités (1945-1963)” (*Anikó Macher*, PhD Candidate, the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris)

“L’Unesco, la Guerre froide et l’Afrique du Nord” (*Moncef Sehbani*, Doctorant. Faculté des Lettres, des Arts et des Humanités. Manouba, Tunisie)

“The Role of UNESCO in the Field of Education, Science, and Culture in Post-Independence Kenya” (*Joshia Osamba*, Department of Philosophy, History & Religion, Egerton University, Kenya)

**Commentator:
Discussion**

4 March, afternoon
1.30 pm- 6.00 pm

Session 2: Engaging the Other Side of the “Iron Curtain”
CHAIR: Ilya V. Gaiduk

Pre-circulated papers:

“UNESCO, the Cold War and Human Rights in the Soviet Bloc, 1978-1989” (*Bent Boel*, Associate Professor, Aalborg University, Denmark)

“American Anthropological Association, UNESCO, and the Promotion of Universal Human Rights during the Cold War” (*Mark Goodale*, Professor, George Mason University, Arlington, USA)

“How UNESCO Helped ‘Rust’ the Iron Curtain Through East-West Youth Volunteering” (*Arthur Gillette*, Director (Ret.), Youth and Sports Activities Division, UNESCO (?))

“The UNESCO European Center for Higher Education (CEPES) in the Context of the Response of UNESCO to the Cold War” (*Leland Conley Barrows*, Professor, Voorhees College, Denmark)

“UNESCO, International Council on Archives (ICA) and the Cold War” (*Klaus Oldenhage*, Vice-President (Ret.), Federal Archives, Germany)

“The Role of UNESCO in Overcoming Consequences of the Chernobyl Catastrophe at the End of the Cold War” (*Roman Romanovsky*, PhD, Mission of Belarus to the European Committees, Brussels)

Commentator: Christian Ostermann, Director, CWIHP, USA
Discussion

Session 3: In the Struggle for Peace and Mutual Understanding
CHAIR: Glenda Sluga

Pre-circulated papers:

“UNESCO’s War at the Cold War: International Peace and Mutual Trust Prevailed” (*Omprakash Dash*, Doctoral Research Scholar, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India)

“L’UNESCO et la Guerre froide: Diversité culturelle et industrie culturelle” (*Beatriz Barreiro Carril*, Doctorant, Universidad Carlos III, Madrid, España)

“La conference intergouvernementale sur la protection des biens culturels en cas de conflit armé (La Haye 1954): illustration de l’impact de la Guerre froide sur le projet phare de l’UNESCO” (*Christian Bolduc*, Archivist, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec)

“Transnational Culture and UNESCO during the Cold War” (*Kouki Hara*, European University Institute)

“L’Unesco et le Conseil du Cinéma” (tentative) (*Suzanne Langlois*, Associate Professor, Université York, Toronto, Canada)

“NOMIC and the Cold War. Issues and Perspectives” (*Michael Palmer*, Université Paris III)

Commentator : Madeleine Herren, Professor, University of Heidelberg

Discussion

5 March, morning

10 am – 12.15 p.m.

Session 4 : UNESCO : A Platform for Promoting Culture, Science, and Education

CHAIR: José Paradiso

Pre-circulated papers:

“Cold War Science and Environmental Security in the UN Specialized Agencies: the Case of UNESCO” (*Jacob Darwin Hamblin*, Department of History, Clemson University, USA)

“Latin American Social Sciences and the Struggle for UNESCO’s leadership during the Cold War: the Competence between Chile and Brazil” (*Fernanda Beigel*, Adjunct Researcher, CONICET, National University of Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina)

“L’Unesco et la naissance des activités spatiales” (*Hervé Moulin*, Doctorant, Paris IV Sorbonne)

“The Movement of Radical Ideas: UNESCO and the John Birch Society” (*Randle Hart*, Assistant Professor, University of Toronto, Canada)

“Belgium and Andre Puttemans’ Contribution to International Understanding and Education through the Revision of History Schoolbooks” (*Eva Schandevyl*, Researcher, Belgium)

“L’Unesco et les deux premières conférences interaméricaines sur l’éducation mathématique” (*Wagner Rodrigues Valente*, Professor, GHEMAT, São Paulo, Brazil)

Commentator :

Discussion

5 March, afternoon

2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Roundtable: Studying UNESCO in the Cold War: Problems, Questions and Perspectives.

Introductory Note: Akira Iriye, Professor, Harvard University

Discussion

Moderators/provocateurs:

Robert Frank, Director, UMR/IRICE

Glenda Sluga, Professor of International History, University of Sydney

Ibrahima Thioub, Professor, Director, History Department, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Senegal

Ilya V. Gaiduk, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow.

Closing remarks:

Mme Françoise Rivière

Jean-François Sirinelli

Jens Boel, UNESCO Chief Archivist, Coordinator of the UNESCO History Project