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NEWSLETTER



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Newsletter of the International Committee for the History of Technology ICOHTEC

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Editorial

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The programme committees of the ICOHTEC & TICCIH joint conference *Reusing the Industrial Past* are hard at work with the programme of the event. We received a delightful number of proposals, more than 300, so bear with the organisers for a little longer while they get the programme finalised – it will be posted on the website by the end of April. The deadline for early registration is **17 May 2010**; if you want to give a paper, the local organisers need your registration before 15 June 2010.

More information on the programme can be found at

www.tampere.fi/industrialpast2010/conference.html

Information on hotels can be found at

www.tampere.fi/industrialpast2010/travel.html#accommodations

Thanks to Catarina Caetano da Rosa and Samia Salem, the Newsletter publishes a report of the 2010 meeting of the Association of German Engineers' commission for the history of technology, which was dedicated to technology and innovation in the Global Economic Crisis 1929-1933.

Happy Easter and best wishes

Yours Stefan Poser

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I. Conference Report

„Forschung tut Not“ – Technik und Innovation in der Weltwirtschaftskrise 1929-1933
/ „Research Is Needed“ – Technology and Innovation in the Global Economic Crisis
1929-1933, February 2010, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Catarina Caetano da Rosa and Samia Salem, caetano@hitech.rwth-aachen.de,
SamiaSalem@t-online.de

The annual conference for the history of technology held by the *Verein Deutscher Ingenieure* [Society of German Engineers] (VDI) took place in Bochum from the 18th to the 19th of February, 2010. HELMUT MAIER (Bochum), the chairman of the VDI's commission for the history of technology, gave an introduction to the conference theme. Taking the global economic crisis after autumn 2008 as his point of departure, he drew a connecting line back to the Great Depression of 1929 – 1933. The two crises differ considerably with regard to their respective manifestations. Hence, an analogy between then and now is problematic. Nevertheless similar questions can be raised for both periods:

- How did the two economic crises affect enterprises and businesses?
- What role did engineers play?
- What measures did they take to overcome the crisis?
- What was the focus of crisis discourses?
- Was the hope that technology and innovation may lead out of the crisis fulfilled?

HARALD WIXFORTH (Bielefeld) provided an overview of the causes, differences and parallels of the great financial crises of 1931 and 2008. He analysed the cover-up policy of the *Nordwolle* firm, which contributed to an exacerbation of the world economic crisis. However, whereas the collapse of *Nordwolle* was rooted in the failure of managers and political decision makers, this is not the case in the current crisis, which is rather rooted in incompetent practices within the financial sphere.

Three lectures took a close look at specific institutions to investigate how they reacted to the crisis. GÜNTHER LUXBACHER (Berlin) demonstrated with the example of an initiative of the Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft (NG) called „Forschung tut Not“ [Research is Necessary], how the attempt to exert influence with a policy of subsidies collapsed like a card house already in the 1920's. SÖREN FLACHOWSKY (Falkensee) used the example of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut (KWI) for iron research to show how an institution financed mainly by

funds from industry weathered the crisis relatively unharmed. The iron- and steel industry hoped, with the help of the institute, to be able to overcome the raw material problems. Hence, in spite of the crisis, it supported the institute generously with financial means and equipment supplies. STEFANIE PREISLER (Freiberg) and NORMAN POHL (Freiberg) dedicated themselves to the Bergakademie [mining academy] Freiberg. Due to social networks and personal endeavours, their closing during the global economic crisis was prevented.

Two lectures used small enterprises as examples to show that the time of crisis sometimes served as an occasion to found new enterprises, although these attempts were not always successful. With the firm *Hager und Elsässer*, established in 1931 in Stuttgart, as an example, THOMAS SCHUETZ (Stuttgart) demonstrated how this enterprise succeeded in finding a way through the global economic crisis. The focus on an alternative procedure in water treatment, ion exchange technology, the construction of user-friendly plants and the clientele built up through a network of friends were necessary conditions for the firm's more or less unscathed emergence from the crisis. CHRISTIAN KURZWEG (Leipzig) addressed the attempt to apply cigarette production methods to cigar production by the industrialist Salomon Kreuter in Döbeln, Saxony, after the First World War. Although mechanically produced cigars at first appeared as a model of success, the cigar factory folded in 1932. This was due to resistance by politicians, as well as by competing cigar producers and -merchants.

Another thematic area was devoted to the question what consequences the global economic crisis had for the automobile industry. According to REINHOLD BAUER (Hamburg), automobile production during the global economic crisis was marked by partial technology transfer from the US, process- and product innovations, rationalisation efforts and innovation activities. Only after 1945 did this lead the Federal Republic of Germany to become the world's largest exporter of passenger vehicles. STEFAN KREBS (Eindhoven) examined the automobile as a symbol of the interwar period. According to Krebs the mass motorisation proved to be a chimaera, because the manufacturers discussed the issue what would be the best for the market for ten years, but never managed to put this into practise.

The concluding podium discussion focused on the question whether innovations might provide a way out of crises. Günther Luxbacher argued that attention should be directed to a greater extent toward improvement innovations, and toward small developmental steps, instead of basic innovations only. Norman Pohl took up the keyword "innovation", and called to mind how much time can slip away between an invention and its implementation (innovation). Reinhold Bauer illustrated this idea by recapitulating that due to the crisis in the automobile industry recourse to already present technological developments occurred. The introduction of certain technical concepts had been accelerated, but this proved profitable only after the crisis. In conclusion, LARS BLUMA (Bochum) called for the investigation of global economic crises from the perspective of both economic history and the history of technology. To this can be added that it would be interesting to complement this approach with insights from social-, political- and cultural history as well.

Please find a more detailed report of Caetano and Salem published in German language in: H-Soz-u-Kult, 17.03.2010, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=3034>.

II. Conference Announcements

29 June – 2 July 2010

14th World Multi-Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics, WMSCI 2010

Orlando, Florida, USA

CFP – Deadline **7 April 2010**

We would like to invite you to participate (submitting an abstract/paper and/or proposing the organization of a session) in The 14th World Multi-Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics: WMSCI 2010, <http://www.sysconfer.org/wmsci>, to be held on June 29th-July 2nd, 2010 in Orlando, Florida, USA.

You can also submit your abstract-paper to another area or any of the following conjoined events, which have the same set of deadlines:

- The SUMMER 4th International Conference on Knowledge Generation, Communication and Management: KGCM 2010, www.sysconfer.org/kgcm
- The 3rd, International Symposium on Academic Globalization: AG 2010, www.sysconfer.org/ag
- The 2nd International Symposium on Peer Reviewing: ISPR 2010, www.sysconfer.org/ispr

Please visit <http://www.sysconfer.org/wmsci>.

28 June – 2 July 2011

6th ESEH Conference

Turku, Finland

CFP – Deadline **3 May 2010**

The online submission form for proposals to the 6th ESEH Conference has been opened. The online submission form for proposals to the 6th ESEH Conference has been opened at: <http://eseh2011.utu.fi/cfp>

The 2011 midsummer conference in Turku will be an innovative and new type of environmental meeting. The aim is to make this conference analytic, interactive and conversational. Welcome are proposals on complete sessions, individual papers and posters. Complimenting

the traditional session programme with consecutive short talks, this conference provides four other session formats. As a result, there are the following five session alternatives:

- 1) Sessions with successive paper presentations
- 2) Roundtables on themes formulated in advance
- 3) Debates between several participants on environmental issues
- 4) Contests between two debaters
- 5) Sessions with commented visualisations, such as paintings, drawings, photos or films.

We conference organisers encourage you choosing freely from these alternatives and submitting complete session proposals especially. Nevertheless, individual paper and poster proposals are also welcome. A paper proposal is expected to include an abstract of an oral presentation of about 20 minutes, whereas a poster proposal should contain an abstract aiming at portraying a graphic view and written synopsis of a research project on paper, ready for display on a stand at the conference.

The theme of the conference is “*Encounters of Sea and Land,*” and under this umbrella theme there are twenty subthemes, which are listed in the Call for Papers section on the conference website. Neither the main theme nor subthemes are binding; suggestions on other themes of environmental history are welcome.

The conference covers all time periods and geographical areas of the globe. In keeping with a cherished tradition of the field, the conference is open to scholars from any discipline, background and continent. Proposals must be written in English, the conference language, and submitted via the online submission form. The submitter should first register into the submission system and follow the instructions of the submission form, which contains boxes for personal data, abstracts and CVs.

Sessions, papers and posters to the conferences will be selected by the members of an international Scientific Committee of ESEH, who will announce the decisions in early autumn 2010. The conference will also include a social programme consisting of receptions, field trips and a banquet. Furthermore, in Finland the days are long in late June: darkness will not hinder your intentions to explore Turku.

Please visit <http://eseh2011.utu.fi/cfp>

If you have any questions related to submissions or formats of sessions, please, do not hesitate to contact the chair of the SC, Frank Uekötter Frank.Uekoetter@carsoncenter.lmu.de, or the chair of the Local Organising Committee, Timo Myllyntaus, timmyl@utu.fi.

1 – 3 July 2010

I-CHORA 5: Fifth International Conference on the History of Records and Archives

London

Registration is now open for I-CHORA 5, co- organized by The National Archives of England, Wales and the United Kingdom, Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies and the Department of Information Studies at University College London. The I-CHORA series began in Toronto in 2003 and continued in Amsterdam, Boston and Perth; it has become the pre-eminent conference for the history of all aspects of recordkeeping principles and practice.

I-CHORA5 will be held in London, with the theme 'Records, archives and technology: interdependence over time'. Thirty speakers from throughout Europe, North America and Australia will address subjects ranging from the early recordkeeping technologies of Peru, through medieval recordkeeping in Venice and Tudor recordkeeping in England, to the nineteenth century British civil service and twentieth century Spain. Keynote papers will be given by Gary Urton (Harvard University), Barbara Craig (University of Toronto), and Paul Luff and Christian Heath (King's College London).

A special rate of £150 is available for delegates registering before 30th April, and covers all conference sessions, visits, and the conference dinner and reception. Day rates of £75 are available, with a concessionary day rate of £25 for students.

The full conference programme and online registration form is available at

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/ichora5/> .

Further enquiries should be addressed to the conference administrator Charlotte Harrison

(c.e.swire@liverpool.ac.uk).

15 – 17 September 2010

Nature and Nation in Europe since 1860. *An International Workshop*

Trento, Italy

CFP – Deadline **30 April 2010**

Putting nature and nation together could seem a dangerous alchemy: racist theories, deterministic approaches, and nationalistic chauvinism seem, in fact, to lurk under every possible discourse on nature and nation.

Environmental history seems however to be the less nationalistic among all historical subfields. While history as discipline was born together with the nation-state building process, from its beginning environmental history engaged in a radical critique of nation as an appropriate scale of analysis: looking at the earth as a whole, political borders simply disappeared. Taking into consideration the current global environmental problems, it could thus seem useless to speak about national borders.

Nonetheless, the nation-state has showed an extraordinary resilience, surviving as main scale of analysis in many environmental historical studies, in part because of the ready availability of sources about nature management and measurement just at the national level. In fact, whatever the size of our scale of analysis might be, if we are looking for historical data we have to deal with states. Evidently, states have affected nature by their laws, economic policies, and juridical systems. Determining property rights, planning urban and industrial development, implementing public/private transportations, building national parks, fighting malaria or other, and bloodier, wars, they have played an important role in shaping the national landscape.

Hence, it is quite clear that the nation-state has long been the political container of nature; even more than this, the nation has been a powerful agent in shaping and understanding the natural world. Recent environmental historical scholarship has clarified how nature shaped the national narratives about people and places, as well as being shaped by those same narratives. Therefore, the nature's agency seems more cultural than material, while the nation's agency has both characters, that is, it constructs narratives and places altogether. It could thus be said that nation and nature constitute mutually.

If nations are also imagined community, we need to understand how nature has been used to build the national identity and how the invention of nation has affected the invention of the national nature. Nature was immanent to the historical and political space; therefore, when nation appropriated this space, nature was appropriated too.

Aims and scope

This workshop focuses on both the symbolic and practical uses that European nation-states have made of the environment and of natural resources since the Second Industrial Revolution. The workshop's geographical framework should be interpreted in the widest possible sense, including countries and regions that have been under the colonial rule of European states during the period of reference.

The general aim of the workshop is thus to obtain a good overview of the role of the modern nation-state and of nationalist discourse in the structuring, management and showcasing of nature/society interactions. The main issues at stake are:

- Resource use and management
- Nature conservation
- The role of states in front of natural disasters and calamities rhetorical and symbolic uses of the natural world
- State vs. communities in the management, knowledge, and vision of nature
- War and appropriation of nature

The organizers want to gather a variety of scholars, not only specialists in environmental history, but also political, cultural and social historians, historical geographers and historical anthropologists with an interest in nationalism, nature perception and/or symbolic politics. During the selection process both comparative analyses at the transnational level and

specific case studies able to give new insights in the mechanism of state management of natural resources and symbolic uses of the natural world will be equally considered.

Practicalities

The workshop is limited to 9 participants. The working language will be English. Each participant will prepare a draft text that will be pre-circulated to workshop attendees in mid-July 2010. At the workshop, each paper will be briefly presented by the author and then fully discussed by the group in a 40 minutes session. After the workshop, participants will be asked to revise their papers for possible inclusion in an edited volume to be submitted to an international academic press or as a journal special issue. Moreover, the organizers are planning to set up a permanent research network on nature and nation in modern Europe and discuss the funding opportunities. Those who are interested are invited thus to join a common discussion about future research projects.

Application

To be considered as a workshop participant, please send an abstract of up to 300 words and a brief CV (13 pages) to info@natureandnation.eu by 30 April 2010. In the accompanying email please specify whether you need a travel grant and if you are interested in the group discussion on the third day.

Organizers: Wilko Graf von Hardenberg (Università degli Studi di Trento)
Marco Armiero (ICTAUAB, Spain; CNRISSM, Naples)

Keynote lecturer: Peter A. Coates (University of Bristol)

Please visit www.natureandnation.eu

Please contact info@natureandnation.eu.

16 – 18 September 2010

Contemporary Medical Science and Technology as a Challenge for Museums. 15th

Conference of the European Association of Museums for the History of Medical Sciences,
EAMHMS

Copenhagen

CFP – **ATTENTION PLEASE: Deadline 29 March 2010**

Medical Museion, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, is organizing a meeting on the challenges to museums posed by contemporary developments in medical science and technology, to be held 16-18 September, 2010.

The background for the meeting is that image of medicine emerging from today's museum galleries and exhibitions is still dominated by pre-modern and modern understandings of an anatomical and physiological body, and by the diagnostic and therapeutical methods and instruments used to intervene with the body at the 'molar' and tangible level – limbs, organs, tissues, etc.

The rapid transition in the medical and health sciences and technologies over the last 50 years towards a molecular understanding of human body in health and disease and the rise of a host of molecular and digital technologies for investigating and intervening with the body is still largely absent in museum collections and exhibitions.

The contemporary transition in medical and health science and technology is a major challenge for exhibition design practices, public outreach strategies, acquisition methodologies, collection management and collection-based research. How do museums today handle the material and visual heritage of contemporary medical and health science and technology? How do curators wield the increasing amount and kinds of intangible scientific and digital objects? Which intellectual, conceptual, and practical questions does this challenge give rise to?

100-300 word proposals for presentations, demonstrations, discussion panels, etc. shall be sent before 29 March 2010 to the chair of the program committee, Thomas Soderqvist, ths@sund.ku.dk.

For further information, see <http://tinyurl.com/ylx5atx> or contact Thomas Soderqvist, ths@sund.ku.dk.

8 – 10 October 2010

WHEATS 2010. Workshop for the History of Environment, Agriculture, Technology & Science

Centre for Culture, History and Environment, University of Wisconsin-Madison

CFP – Deadline **15 April 2010**

The Centre for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is pleased to be hosting WHEATS in Fall 2010. Now in its seventh year, the Workshop for the History of Environment, Agriculture, Technology, and Science (WHEATS) brings together graduate students studying the history of the environment, agriculture, science, or technology. WHEATS is open to submissions from any discipline with interests in these fields. Papers – generally 25-30 pages – are circulated in advance to all participants, and at the workshop papers receive feedback from participants and senior scholars through a roundtable discussion. This format is well suited for works in progress, and the workshop will have sessions on professional development as well as opportunities to meet and engage members of the broader CHE community.

Due to logistical constraints, papers must be in English. UW-Madison will provide housing, food, and some funding to help defray travel costs. Potential participants should submit a one-page abstract (200 words) and short curriculum vitae by April 15, 2010. All submissions will be acknowledged by e-mail. Applicants should note their year of graduate study or Ph.D. completion date. Accepted papers will be due August 31, 2010.

Please visit <http://envhist.wisc.edu/wheats>

For further information please contact Amrys Williams, aowilliams@wisc.edu
Please send submissions to Kellen Backer, kbacker@wisc.edu

5 – 6 November 2010

Technik im Museum - Wie Museen Technik darstellen / Technology in Museums - How Museums Present Technology

Eisenbibliothek, Schlatt, Switzerland

CFP – ATTENTION PLEASE: Deadline 31 March 2010

The Eisenbibliothek, Foundation of Georg Fischer Ltd., Schaffhausen, would like to offer young academics a chance to present a paper and discuss their research results at their annual conference on the history of technology. The topic of this year's conference is deliberately broad and suggestions covering the whole range of the history of technology field as well as projects from related subjects concerned with issues of the history of technology are very welcome.

The conferences have been held for over 30 years and serve as a meeting place for academics and researchers from all over the world to discuss topics from the field of the history of technology in an interdisciplinary context. References to the present are, however, also an important aspect of the conference. Topics of the past years have been, for example, "Transfer of knowledge and technology Asia – Europe" (2009), "Handling of metals: on the way to the final product" (2008), "Tunnelling: subterranean perspectives" (2007), "Rolling: technological and historico-cultural aspects in history and the present" (2006). The conference takes place in Switzerland, Klostersgut Paradies in Schlatt, home of the Eisenbibliothek (www.eisenbibliothek.ch), on 5.–6. November 2010.

The Eisenbibliothek offers free accommodation to speakers and the subsequent publishing of their paper in the library's own annual journal "Ferrum". Presentation length is limited to 30 minutes, followed by questions and discussion. 50 guests, mainly speakers of German, attend the conference each year, but papers in English are welcome.

Abstracts shouldn't exceed two A4-pages and should be submitted electronically. In addition, information about your biography/professional development and current activity should be provided. Please send abstracts to: Dr. Britta Leise britta.leise@georgfischer.com.

The conference is organised by the Eisenbibliothek. The conference program is organized by Dr. Helmut Lackner (Technisches Museum Wien), Prof. Dr. Friedrich Steinle (TU Berlin), Kilian T. Elsasser (Museumsfabrik Luzern).

Please visit <http://www.eisenbibliothek.ch>.

Please contact Britta Leise, Eisenbibliothek, Klostersgut Paradies,
britta.leise@georgfischer.com.

10 – 12 December 2010

Heuristics in Physics. Workshop of the Section for History of Physics and the Working Group of Philosophy of Physics in the German Physical Society (DPG)

Physics-Center, Bad Honnef near Bonn, Germany

CFP – Deadline **15 June 2010**

From Dec. 10-12, 2010, the Section for History of Physics and the Working Group of Philosophy of Physics in the German Physical Society (DPG) are organizing an international workshop on heuristics in physics. Herewith we invite submissions of abstracts of minimum 1-page length for 30-min. talks to be presented during this workshop (in English only).

Historical case studies of the use of specific heuristics in the *history of physics* from all periods, diachronic or synchronic comparisons, and more general philosophical analyses or classifications of heuristics in the physical sciences are equally welcome.

Invited plenary speakers include:

- Prof. Olivier Darrigol (CNRS, Paris) on heuristics of early quantum theorists,
- Prof. Nancy Nersessian (Georgia Tech) on heuristics in Maxwellian electrodynamics,
- Prof. John Norton (Pittsburgh) on heuristics in Einstein's special theory of relativity.

The workshop will take place in the Physik-Zentrum Bad Honnef, www.pbh.de/index.shtml an impressive 19th-century mansion located on the banks of the Rhine and not far from the Drachenfels, one of the most picturesque rocks in the lovely Rhine valley. Conference fee will be EUR 120,- (whole conference) plus EUR 25,- per night for bed & breakfast for a limited number of registered participants - room reservations will be done on a first come-first serve-basis.

Please send all abstracts per e-mail to BOTH of the following two organizers of the workshop before June 15, 2010:

Klaus Hentschel (Head of the Section for History of Science and Technology, Univ. Stuttgart and substitute head of the section for history of physics in the DPG):

klaus.hentschel@po.hi.uni-stuttgart.de and

Brigitte Falkenburg (Philosophy Department, TU Dortmund, and speaker of the working group for philosophy of physics in the DPG):

brigitte.falkenburg@tu-dortmund.de

The organizers will notify all submitters whether their offer for a talk has been accepted before July 15th, 2010.

12 – 16 April 2011

History and Sustainability: Stories of Progress, Hubris, Decline, and Resilience

ASEH Annual Conference

Phoenix, Arizona,

CFP – Deadline **30 June 2010**

The conference will be hosted by Arizona State University, one of the country's outstanding innovators in sustainability studies, and will be held at the Wyndham Hotel in downtown Phoenix. At the height of springtime, we will have an outstanding set of field trips and special events, including an overnight birding trip to southern Arizona before the conference, an overnight trip to the Grand Canyon after the conference, and half-day field trips on Friday to explore water development, urban planning, archaeological sites, desert wetlands, and more. Our final evening's reception will be held at the beautiful Desert Botanical Garden. In addition we will hold special workshops including a sustainability workshop sponsored by ASU's School of Sustainability and the Decision Center for a Desert City.

The program committee invites panel, roundtable, working group, individual paper, and poster proposals for the conference. We prefer to receive complete session proposals but will endeavor to construct sessions from proposals for individual presentations. Sessions will be scheduled for 1.5 hours; panels should include a maximum of three papers plus an optional discussant, as *significant time for audience discussion must be included in every session*.

The committee invites proposals in formats beyond the typical paper session where presenters offer something other than verbatim recitals of written papers. Participants may give only one formal presentation at the conference, but they may also engage in roundtable, chairing, or comment duties. To submit proposals, go to the on-line system at www.aseh.net "Phoenix Conference." All proposals must be submitted through the on-line system, which will be available by May 2010.

All presenters and other participants are expected to register for the annual meeting. If you have questions, please contact a member of the 2011 program committee:

Richard Tucker, University of Michigan, Chair, rptucker@umich.edu

Connie Chiang, Bowdoin College, cchiang@bowdoin.edu

Michael Egan, McMaster University, egan@mcmaster.ca

Paul Hirt, Arizona State University, paul.hirt@asu.edu

Laura Watt, Sonoma State University, laura.watt@sonoma.edu

III. Recently Published Books

Arthur Brehmer (ed.): Die Welt in 100 Jahren. Mit einem Vorwort und einem einführenden Essay „Zukunft von gestern“ von Georg Ruppelt. Berlin 1910. 2. Reprint 2010. Olms Presse, Hildesheim a.o. 2010.

The book, first published in 1910, offered an expert based extrapolation of societal and technological developments after the turn to the 21st century. Main emphasis was dedicated to the development of technology.