

Call for Papers

Conference: Demographic Concepts, Population Policy, Genocide - The First World War as a Caesura?

Date: 29th September to 1st October 2016

Organizer: Lepsiushaus Potsdam, University of Potsdam (Lehrstuhl für Militärgeschichte/Kulturgeschichte der Gewalt)

The politics of ethnic violence attained new dimensions during the First World War. Not only were crimes committed by foreign armies against the 'enemy' population, but violence by organs of the state against sections of their own inhabitants also reached unprecedented dimensions and bequeathed to the post-war period the ideal of a purportedly homogenous nationalistic people.

During the Balkan wars of 1912–13 it had already come to unilaterally forced as well as negotiated population shifts. During the First World War the Hapsburg military took action in the frontline areas of Galicia against its own Ukrainian and in the Balkans against its own Serb populations, which found themselves suspected of disloyalty. In the German Empire thoughts about a Polish border strip were linked to initial deliberations about ethnic cleansing ("völkische Flurbereinigung"). In Russia expulsions and deportations from different territories were aimed especially against the Jewish and Muslim sectors of the population, and in the course of the war against Poles and Ukrainians as well. In the Ottoman Empire the Armenian genocide was embedded in an extensive population policy that affected both the Pontic Greeks and the Kurdish population.

Although the magnitude of radical population politics during the First World War with its precursors in the Balkan wars, the post-war struggles in the Ottoman Empire as well as in Russia appears obvious, there has been very little undertaken to view it from a comparative perspective, which could help to clear up many questions.

- Did the war, which was perceived as a struggle for survival, turn regional into global conflicts and thus radicalise them? Or did certain countries use the state of war within a global war to solve regional conflicts quickly and in a radical way?
- Can it be demonstrated that horizons of understanding can be expanded by observing radical population policies and thus be utilised to create a model for a country's own population policy? Are the learning effects more likely to be national or transnational?
- In what way were military plans and domestic measures intertwined? How can the role of paramilitary units be described? What role did the appropriation of property play?
- To what degree did state authorities that undertook and organised population policies before the war still play a part during and after the war?
- Did social utopias play a significant role?
- What continuities were there before, during and after the war? Were conflicts in the border regions shortly before the war again fuelled in connection with a population policy? In what way can the religious, ethnic and social motives of the population policy be clearly differentiated?
- Was there substantial domestic resistance?
- What factors distinguished the Ottoman Empire from other multiethnic empires so that the most radical population policy was implemented there and did set genocidal processes in motion?

We are looking for papers from academics and scholars from different fields of study about the Ottoman, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and German Empires, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece concerning the time period between 1912 and up to the 1920s.

Paper proposals across all disciplines are invited. Young scholars are especially welcome for the opportunity to make a significant contribution to this field. Interested applicants should submit for consideration 1) a short curriculum vitae (one page maximum) including name,

address, email and telephone number; 2) the title and an abstract of your paper (approx. 500 words in English) addressing its basic arguments, its sources and its relation to your current projects. The abstract should relate to at least three questions listed above.

The conference will be held in English. We plan to publish extended versions of selected papers.

The costs of travel, accommodation, registration and meals will be covered for applicants whose papers are accepted.

The final deadline for submitting proposals is 15th April 2016

Please email materials or further questions to Dr. Christin Pschichholz
(pschichholz@lepsiushaus-potsdam.de).