

THE BREAK-UP OF THE K.U.K. “CONTRACT” IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY DURING WWI: CLUES AND SIGNS

Place: Maison de la Recherche, Université Paris IV Paris-Sorbonne.

Date: 22-23 March 2018

Organizers: UMR-SIRICE (CNRS, Paris I-IV, Sorbonne), CREE-Inalco, LABEX EHNE.

Project

This conference is the third and last part of a cycle entitled “Writing at War, writing the War. Austria-Hungary’s Soldiers and Civilians in WWI”. It aims to contribute to a reflexion “from below”, mostly through non-governmental and private sources. It favours a local or regional approach and intends to take into account the diverse situations the local populations faced, as soldiers or as civilians at the rear. The first conference (October 2016, Inalco, Paris) was devoted to the eve of war, the second (June 2017, Inalco and Paris-IV Sorbonne) to *k.u.k.* solidarities and their evolutions.

Call for papers

It is now generally accepted that the weakening of Austria-Hungary’s State legitimacy cannot be reduced to the “national question” or shortages. Our hypothesis is that the cautious scrutiny of the relationship between the main political centres – Vienna and Budapest – and the different components of the mobilized society in the overall organization of the “war society”, more specifically during the second part of the war, is of great relevance to map the cracks that appeared bit by bit in the imperial and royal consensus and in consent to the explicit and implicit rules of what John Horne called the specific “wartime social morality”. This “contract” involves the responsibility of the citizens and its total devotion to the Austrian fatherland as well as the responsibility of the State itself. This morality seemed to weaken from summer 1916 onwards. We will identify some of the clues and signs of this weakening and analyse some of its diverse aspects.

We will focus mostly on three points:

- How was the Austrian administrative war governance blamed for the growing difficulties and malfunctioning of the everyday life at the rear? How, and to what extent, were its strategies as to the economic structure in general or to specific issues and categories of population contested (children, refugees and POWs, for instance)?
- What impact and consequences did the tightening of the prescriptive frame (either moral or legal) have? What are the main strategies that arose to bypass or sidestep it, and how should they be analysed?
- How, and using which clues is it possible to observe a slackening of the link between the front line and the rear, the limits of donation campaigns, and the gradual “nationalization” of support committees? Local and regional consequences of these reconfigurations will be the priority.

Practical information

- Accommodation (2 nights) and meals are at the organizers’ expense.
- The organizers do not cover travel expenses.
- Proposals are to be sent **before 30 November 2018**. They should be within the 300-500 words range (in English or French) and sent to Étienne Boisserie – etienne.boisserie@inalco.fr and Catherine Horel – horel.c@orange.fr.
- Presentations of accepted papers (in English or French) should not last more than 20 minutes.

Étienne Boisserie, CREE, Inalco

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