



The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars
in European Experiences and Memories

Workshop:

THE REVOLUTIONARY AND NAPOLEONIC WARS: New Approaches and Future Questions of Research

Military History Research Institute, Potsdam, November 1, 2004

No period between the Thirty Years' War and the First World War has influenced European history as profoundly and lastingly as that between 1792 and 1815. This was not only because of the clash of ideologies (and the civilisations built upon them) of the French Revolutionaries on the one hand and the ancien régimes on the other: as new model and reactionary counter-model, both determined the political cultures of Europe lastingly, with the French Revolutionary ideals of democracy, equal rights of citizens and human rights emerging triumphantly throughout the whole continent only by the end of the 20th century. Both models had a major, immediate impact on the rest of Europe through the wars, which came to affect every part of Europe, and even reached out to other continents. For the first time in modern history, they were fought with mass armies and conceived of as "national wars", with far-reaching consequences for (the) economy, society, politics and culture. The number of military and civilian casualties, as a percentage of overall population figures, is similar to that of the First World War. Followed by a long peaceful lull without major wars, these wars of 1792-1815 acquired a major importance in the collective memories of Europeans and their states, populations and regions, which lasted well into the 20th century. This is borne out not only by historiography, but also by the multitude of popular mementoes, memoirs, pictures and paintings, statues, broad-sheets, auto-biographies, historical novels, poetry and plays set in this period, and indeed in more modern times films and other modern media, which can be found throughout Europe and are the most important vehicles of historical memory and tradition for the population at large, apart from oral history with its shorter "life span" of tradition, where it is not recorded in more lasting media.

The planned project "Nations, Borders, Identities: The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in European Experiences and Memories" will contribute to a genuinely European historiography, by studying the experiences and recollections of the wars of 1792 to 1815 in the respective populations and regions involved. We will try to find out which factors formed individual and collective experiences and memories, and thus the communicative memory. Which parts became translated into a communicative memory, and which factors in turn influenced its manifestations and subsequent transformations, re-invention, and re-construction? Central to our comparative approach are two questions:

- What is the interrelationship between experience, memory and national or regional constructions of identity?
- Which experiences and memories were shared among the nations and regions affected, which differed, which varied, and how did they influence each other?

This first workshop of our research project is designed to bring together the main team of research leaders together with leading experts in the field, to discuss and compare the present existing historiographic literature and the main methodological approaches and the main debates among historians in the context of this literature. As the literature on this subject is so vast, and written in so many different European languages, no one scholar can hope to be aware of all of it, which is why this workshop is designed to pool information about what already exists, with regard to the main regions that were involved in these wars. Obviously, this will be done in the light of the project as we have formulated it above. This will allow us

- to identify gaps in the existing historiography which might need to be filled before we can fully engage in a comparative study
- to research questions and methodological approaches already found in existing literature of which some of us were perhaps not yet aware, and which allow us to develop an own approach to these questions further,
- to brainstorm with regard to further methodological approaches and research questions which might help us come to grips with this very large subject, to achieve a high degree of coherence and methodological similarity in our research and writing which alone will make overall comparisons between different regions and nations possible.

The lead question will be how a European history of the experiences and memories of the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars can be researched and written around the core concepts of interrelations, transfer and comparison. Can the methodological approach, discussed so intensively in recent years, of the "Histoire Croisée", be useful and productive for our purposes?

Programme:

Welcome and Introduction:

9.15-9.30 a.m.

Dr. Jörg DUPPLER and Prof. Beatrice HEUSER (Military History Research Institute Potsdam, MGFA)

Prof. Etienne FRANÇOIS (Technical University of Berlin, TU) and **Prof. Karen HAGEMANN** (TU Berlin / University of Glamorgan)

Introductory Lecture:

9.30-10.45 a.m.

Dr. Charles ESDAILE (University of Liverpool):

The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: New Approaches and Future Questions of Research

Moderation: Prof. Karen HAGEMANN (University of Glamorgan)

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11.00-11.50 a.m.

Prof. Alan FORREST (University of York):

The state of research on France

Moderation: Dr. Jörg DUPPLER (MGFA)

11.50 a.m. - 12.40 p.m.

Dr. Jane RENDALL (University of York):

The state of research on Britain in gendered perspective

Moderation: Prof. Beatrice HEUSER (MGFA)

1.45-2.30 p.m.

Dr. Ruth LEISEROWITZ (Humboldt University of Berlin):

The state of research on Russia and Poland

Moderation: Prof. Hans Henning HAHN (University of Oldenburg):

2.30 -3.15 p.m.

Dr. Charles ESDALE (University of Liverpool):

The state of research on Portugal and Spain

Moderation: Prof. Reinhard STAUBER (University of Klagenfurt)

3.45-4.30 p.m.

Prof. Horst CARL (University of Giessen):

The state of research on Belgium, and the Netherlands

Moderation: Prof. Etienne FRANÇOIS (TU Berlin)

4.30-5.15 p.m.

Dr. Michael ROWE (King's College London)

The state of research on Germany

Moderation: Prof. Ute Daniel (University of Brunswick)

Round Table: Comparison, Transfer, Histoire Croisée: New Approaches towards a Comparative European History

5.30-7.00 p.m.

- Prof. Etienne FRANÇOIS (TU Berlin)
- PD Dr. Jörn LEONHARD (Historisches Kolleg München)
- PD Dr. Matthias MIDDEL (University of Leipzig)
- PD Dr. Arndt BAUERKÄMPER (Berlin Colleg for Comparative History)

Moderation: Prof. Karen HAGEMANN (TU Berlin / University of Glamorgan)

Organization:

- Prof. Beatrice Heuser, E-Mail: BeatriceHeuser@bundeswehr.org or dbg.heuser@web.de
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