

Warfare, Welfare, and Transformation of European Society in the 20th Century

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Outline

The workshop aims to study the transformative impact of 20th century wars on European societies. It pursues two main research avenues:

- it emphasises a perspective “from below”, by focusing on the relations between society and State policy;
- it deconstructs the traditional view centred on the Nation-State, by analysing the phenomena of mobilisation, demobilisation and transformation according to infra-state (at micro and meso levels) as well as supra-state scales.

The existing interdisciplinary scientific literature on the topic thoroughly scrutinised the various causal mechanisms that linked *total war* with social reforms, the impact of modern warfare on State structures and policies, the consequences of wartime mobilisation on labour movement as well as on constituent bodies. Based on these research outputs, this workshop purposes to shift focus on social actors and “sectional interests” (e.g. unions, employers’ organisations, voluntary sector), and aims to discuss the impact of the war from a transnational and entangled point of view. This workshop aims to highlight three main phenomena:

- the role of the transfers, mutual learning, and competition among the warring parties;
- the action of international and humanitarian organisations in the reconsideration of social policy during and after wartimes;
- the links between war and social reform in Europe as well as in the colonial territories of European powers.

The workshop intends to use interpretations and methodologies from different disciplines, so as to provide a comprehensive view that integrates the current scientific literature on the topic. It also analyses the entangled features of the many links between war and social change by emphasising connections along two binomials: “State-society” and “national-supranational”. As it calls into question the natural primacy of the scale of analysis of the nation-state, it questions the caesura between wartimes and post-war times to consider the processes of war exit (*sortie de guerre*) and those of social translation beyond the end of the fighting.

The workshop welcomes contributions dealing with:

- the interaction between public and non-State actors;
- the role of social interests and groups in organising and/or prompting social reform;
- the transfers and exchanges that enabled the international spread of ideas and projects concerning social reform;
- the international humanitarianism and social aid.

We would welcome contributions from history, political sciences, social sciences, anthropology.

The workshop provides a spotlight to study warfare in its impacts on social actors at national, supranational, and transnational levels, as well as the entanglements between European and non-European areas. Relevant questions stemming from this topic may include:

1. How did specific social groups (e.g. conscript workers, POWs, unionists, employers, mutual sector, colonial administrations, etc.) reconsider the relationship between State and society during and after the First and Second World Wars?

2. How did these sectional interests concretely act to negotiate autonomous action for social improvement and with public authorities?
3. To what extent specific social groups, voluntary associations, etc. were able to organise social relief out of – or in collaboration with – the State?
4. How and to what extent did the war act as a catalyst for transnational/supranational social change?
5. Through what formal and informal channels/non-State actors did social reform ideas, practices, policies circulate between countries (including transfers between metropolises and colonies) and/or crisscross enemies' lines?
6. What impact did international/humanitarian organisations and the 'mixed economy' of welfare have in implementation of a more inclusive social policy?
7. How can history and political/social sciences interact so as to provide a more all-rounded interpretation of the warfare-to-welfare transformative phenomenon at all levels (State/society; national/transnational; political/economic; metropole/colonies etc.)

Workshop and Outputs

Depending on the evolution of the sanitary situation, this 1-day workshop will take place at the end of September 2021 in Berlin, at the Centre Marc Bloch. The workshop stems from the collaboration among the Centre Marc Bloch (Berlin) and the Research Center on Inequality and Social Policy (SOCIUM, UniBremen). We plan to have 2/3 panels dealing with:

1. Transformative Impacts of War: State Policy and Social Actors;
2. National and Transnational Dimensions of Warfare and Social Change;
3. Warfare-to-Welfare Theory Between History and Social Sciences.

This workshop is conceived as the first stage of a collective reflection on the theme "Warfare, Welfare and Transformations of European Society in the 20th Century".

Proposals in the form of a short presentation (500-1.000 words) with a title and a short CV (2 pages maximum) should be sent by 25th of June 2021 to the following two e-mail addresses:

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