

**The Experience of War in a
Border Region:
Belgium, Luxemburg, the
Netherlands and Germany
1914-1945**

RWTH Aachen University,
12./13.03.2009

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12/03/09

09:00	Welcome address by Paul Thomes (Department of Economic and Social History)
09:30	Opening remarks: The experience of war in a border region (Christoph Rass)
Session 1	The First World War and the interwar years (chair Christoph Rass)
10:00	A special drama was presented to us." The civil Experience of War in the German-Belgian border region at the beginning of the First World War (Bernhard Liemann)
11:00	In the Shadow of Total War: Border defence concepts in the military debate of the interwar period in Belgium (Daniel Marc Segesser)
12:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>
Session 2	The Second World War and its (regional) battlefields (chair Jost Dülffer)
13:00	The experience of war and occupation in Maastricht and Liège (Paul Bonzwaer)
14:00	Running Fights at the Western Front: Evacuation, Fortification, and Partisan Warfare September 1944 - März 1945) (Armin Nolzen)
15:00	Akkers van Margraten (Fields of Margraten) – Netherlands (Frans Roebroeks, Albert Elings)
16:00	Rest in Peace - German war cemeteries in the Hürtgenforest (Jens Lohmeier)
19:00	<i>Joint Dinner</i>

13/03/09

Session 3	War and memory post 1945 (chair Karola Fings)
09:00	National community, border region and transnational mobility in family recollections of Second World War (Renée Wagener)
10:00	War-Related Tourism in Germany and its Western Neighbour s. Comparative Studies in Locations, Concepts, Visitor s and Chances (Florian Wöltering)
11:00	Dealing with contested legacies – border fortifications of the Second World War as subjects of a transnational art-educational project (Christiane Keim)
12:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
	Conclusions and Perspectives (chair Frank Möller)
13:00	War and occupation as a subject for border studies (Ad Knotter)
14:00	Concluding remarks and discussion (Frank Möller / Achim Konejung)
15:00	End of workshop

The Experience of War in a Border Region: Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Germany 1914-1945

How did war impact on Western European borderlands? What was the regional experience? What were the cultural, economic and social consequences, and how did they reach into the subsequent period of peace and/or future wars? How did war shape landscapes and local communities? How does local and national memory reflect the regional experience and how do Western European border regions deal with their peculiar heritage?

Such questions will be discussed in a conference to be held at the RWTH Aachen University on March 12 and 13, 2009. The aim is to convene an international group of academics to initiate exchange and debate on how war was waged, perceived, experienced and overcome in the region where Luxemburg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany touch during, and since, the Age of Total War 1914 to 1945.

The workshop will focus on the Second World War, while the First World War and the interwar years will be considered to provide a backdrop for discussion. Thematically, the workshop centres on the origins, consequences, perceptions and legacies of border fortifications (or their absence) in the region under scrutiny. While these massive structures are generally discussed from a military perspective or in context of political histories, this workshop will shed light on their cultural, social and economic histories, and will examine their legacies in a transnational and regional perspective.

The conference is organized in five sessions of four papers each. Individual papers are limited to 20 minutes to reserve sufficient time for discussion. Each session will bring together experts from various countries. Conference language is English.

Session 1: World War I and its aftermath:

Topics: World War I in the borderland: How did it change regional mentalities and landscapes; which were the reactions on national or local level; what were the consequences for the borderland?

Session 2: Borderlands in the interwar years:

Topics: Decision-making and construction of border defences before and after the First World War; their socio-economic impact on the affected regions in times of peace; what did the neighbours know and think?

Session 3: From prelude to war - 1938-1942/43:

Topics: Regional experience under the threat of war; its outbreak and impact on each region, including aspects of violence under occupation.

Session 4: War returns - The final stages of World War II 1944/45:

Topics: Different perceptions and experiences regarding the last major battles in the borderlands; killing and dying in the last days of war; liberation and defeat.

Session 5: Coming to terms: Memory, history, politics and tourism.

Themes: National and regional historiographies; mainstream memory and hidden histories? What is left of the war: cemeteries, battlefields, fortifications and memorials; local initiatives, historians and innovative tourism in a national and transnational perspective.

Conveners

- Department of Economic and Social History, RWTH Aachen University, PD Dr. Christoph Rass
- Gesellschaft für Interdisziplinäre Praxis e.V., Frank Möller
- Konejung Stiftung:Kultur, Achim Konejung
- NS-Dokumentationszentrum der Stadt Köln, Dr. Karola Fings

Travel expenses and accommodation cost of invited speakers will be covered.

Short Proposals for a conference paper (max. 2 pages) accompanied by a brief cv may be sent to Dr. Christoph Rass, LuF Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, Templergraben 83, 52062 Aachen or christoph.rass@wiso.rwth-aachen.de. Deadline for applications is November 1, 2008. Selected contributors will be notified by December 1. It is intended to publish the conference papers as a collection of essays.

Brief abstract

Session 1: World War I and its aftermath

“A special drama was presented to us.”

The civil Experience of War in the German-Belgian border region at the beginning of the First World War.

Due to the growing tension in the international relations during the last days of July 1914, the inhabitants of the district of Eupen went in fear of a Belgo-French invasion. Instead of this scenario, the district became the central hub for the German invasion into neutral Belgium, which began in the early morning hours of August 4th.

The civil experience of war was dominated by the division of military enthusiasm and heavy burdens in the Everyday Life. On the one hand, the people were impressed by the never-ending troop movements with their newest war technologies including the aircraft and the zeppelin. The perception with their own senses supported the belief in the strength of the German army. On the other hand, heavy burdens like the military billets or the total collapse of transport were placed on the civilians.

Living in the borderland, the inhabitants of the district of Eupen have been more well-informed about the military actions than most of the people in Inner-Germany. Because of transborder-networks, many people had the chance to de-construct the franc-tireur-propaganda, published in German newspapers. Thus, the civil experience of war in the borderland was composed of an ambivalent mixture of national and transnational elements.

According to the changing territorial belongings in the 20th century, the memory of the First World War has seen permanent reinterpretations.

Short biographical information

Bernhard Liemann has just delivered his Master's thesis about the civil experience of war in the German-Belgian border region at the beginning of WWI (supervisor: Prof. Dr. Friso Wielenga). He studied modern history, political science and culture, communication and management at the universities of Münster and Leuven. As a student member of staff he joined the research-project “Nationalism and Everyday Life at the German-Belgian Border (1815-1920)”, promoted by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

In the Shadow of Total War: Border defence concepts in the military debate of the interwar period in Belgium

PD Dr. Daniel Marc Segesser

University of Bern

Abstract

After shortly discussing the concept of total war and the issue of border defence in the Belgian context the presentation will focus on two main issues, Belgium's war experience in 1914-1918 - the so called "German Atrocities", the German occupation policy and the new forms of fighting - on the one hand and the military debate in the interwar period among Belgian officers as to the consequences to be drawn from this experience for future defence concepts on the other. Based on the reconstruction of the facts by John Horne and Alan Kramer and on the wartime debate on the issue - due to German censorship mainly outside Belgium - the presentation in its first part will try to give an answer to the question in what way the wartime experience shaped the mind and memory of the Belgian people and its military personnel and thereby laid the foundations for the interwar relations with neighbouring Germany. In its second part the focus will be on the interwar debate among Belgian officers as to the consequences to be drawn from the wartime experience. The main aim will be to show in what way the German atrocities of 1914, the occupation of the country and the form of fighting prevalent during World War I shaped the discussions amongst Belgian officers and the military leadership on future defence concept - especially in relation to border defence - during a time, when future wars were considered to be "total wars".

Curriculum Vitae

PD Dr. Daniel Marc Segesser is Privatdozent and Collaborator of the Head of the Department at the University of Bern in Switzerland. His publications include studies on the history of Australia, the military history of Belgium and France as well as the history of the international legal debate on the punishment of war crimes in the period between 1872 and 1945 and of international law more in general. Currently he is working on a new research project on the history of India in the 19th and early 20. century. From 1996 to 1999 he was part of a more general research project on the Military Journals and the International Debate on Past and Future Warfare (1918-1939) led by Prof. Dr. Stig Förster, out of which has grown a study on defence matters in Belgium in the interwar period.

Some relevant publications

- Landesverteidigung im Schatten des totalen Krieges: Das belgische Offizierskorps und die Sicherung der territorialen Integrität des Landes, in: *An der Schwelle zum Totalen Krieg: Die militärische Debatte über den Krieg der Zukunft, 1919-1939*, (Krieg in der Geschichte, Bd. 13) hrsg. von Stig Förster, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2002, S. 267-322.
- Common Doctrine rather than Secret Staff Conversations: Military Cooperation between France and Switzerland in the 1920s and 1930s, in: *War in History* 10, 2003, S. 60-91.
- The International Debate on the Punishment of War Crimes During the Balkan Wars and the First World War, in: *Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Research* 31, 2006, S. 533-554.
- Die Haager Landkriegsordnung in der internationalen wissenschaftlichen Debatte über Kriegsverbrechen im Ersten und Zweiten Weltkrieg, in: *Die Friedens-Warte: Journal of International Peace and Organization* 82, 2007, S. 65-82.

ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF THE IMPACT OF THE GERMAN INVASION IN BELGIUM AND HOLLAND IN MAY 1940 ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN LIÈGE AND MAASTRICHT

In Holland was established a Civil Administration (*Zivilverwaltung*), in Belgium a Military Government (*Militärverwaltung*). I Will compare shortly these two kinds of occupational government.

On local level the burgomasters who had been appointed before May 1940 could remain in office till a certain moment. Who were these persons? How did they regard the invasion and what was there attitude towards the occupier? These questions will be answered in the first section of my lecture in a comparative way.

After their dismissal national socialists succeeded them in both towns. This fact had far-reaching consequences for the local governance, for the occupation in general and for the citizens in particular. Here I will compare the national socialist burgomasters who were in position working for the Nazis. In Maastricht there were four national socialist burgomasters, in Liège only one who had a great influence on the way Liège was governed during his governance.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Paul Bronzwaer was born in Maastricht in 1936. He studied French language and literature at the university of Utrecht. He worked 39 years as teacher in French language and literature and at the Sint Maartenscollege (gymnasium) in Maastricht. In the same time he was for more than twenty years deputy Headmaster. He published three books about the war in and the liberation of Maastricht. 1 *Maastricht bevrijd! En toen..?* 2 *Vier jaar zwijgen* 3 *Het Veldeke College*. In June he will defend a thesis that is a comparative study of five aspects of the German occupation of Maastricht and Liège durin the Second World War.

Armin Nolzen (Bochum University)

**Running Fights at the Western Front: Evacuation, Fortification, and Partisan Warfare
(September 1944 to March 1945)**

Abstract for the Workshop

**"The Experience of War in a Border Region:
Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Germany, 1914-1945"**

RWTH Aachen University, March 12-13, 2009

The lecture deals with the impact of war on the German Western borderlands between summer 1944 and spring 1945. It is part of a broader research on the Nazi regime's efforts of mobilizing the population to engage in running fights (*Abwehrkampf*) against the Western Allies, starting with the *Wehrmacht's* withdrawal from Nazi occupied Eupen and Malmedy in August 1944. Generally, mobilizing German society was a combined effort in which the Nazi Party, its divisions like the SS (*Schutzstaffel*) or the HJ (*Hitler-Jugend*) and its affiliations like the NSV (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*) worked together with local administration, police, and military institutions. Away from military battles which I will not investigate, there existed a variety of actions in which these running fights manifested. I'll examine three forms of them more closely: Evacuation, Fortification and Partisan Warfare.

a) Evacuation: When Allied troops advanced to the German border, within the Nazi bureaucracy a consensus emerged to put into practice the so-called ARLZ-policy. It encompassed women's and children's evacuation (*Auflockerung*), full evacuation of civilians and their facilities (*Räumung*), the paralysis of industrial and agricultural production (*Lähmung*) and the complete destruction of infrastructure, for example of bridges and railways (*Zerstörung*). Evacuation began uncontrolled when thousands of French, Belgian and Dutch Nazi collaborators followed the *Wehrmacht* and flew into the Reich in August/September 1944. There, they had to be provided with food, housing and other facilities. The same is true for the German population which got evacuated successively, depending on Allied troop's advance. Since September 1944, approximately one million persons were moved eastwards by the NSV and the local administration.

b) Fortification: Since September 1944, more than 250.000 persons, mainly slave labourers, were brought to the Western Front to strengthen the Siegfried Line from the Netherlands to the South of Germany. Nazi Party and NSV officials were responsible for worker's transportation and food supply and supervised the building efforts. The General for Sappers and Fortresses and its regional units coordinated operative and tactical measures and collaborated with Party officials intimately. Violence against foreign labourers escalated, and even German civilians were obliged to work for the fortification by the so-called *Notdienstverpflichtungen*. New possible forms of resistance and dissent with the Nazi regime emerged. But instead of staying apart, most German civilians did not hesitate to support mobilization for the "final victory" (*Endsieg*).

c) Partisan Warfare: Since Aachen was occupied by Allied troops, Nazi officials intensely prepared for implementing Partisan Warfare at the Western Front. They put into practice new organizations like the *Deutscher Volkssturm*, the *Werwolf* and the *Freikorps Adolf Hitler* in order to fight Allied troops with civilian manpower. The *Volkssturm* was provided as a regular territorial militia whose exclusively male participants held the status of combatants. It was built by regional and local Nazi Party's functionaries, trained by the SS and struggled under control of the German Army. During the last weeks of the Nazi regime, *Volkssturm* members in the Western borderlands killed German civilians, slave labourers and other people blamed as "defeatists". The *Werwolf* recruited girls and boys from HJ and BDM (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*). Its most prominent action took place in March 1945 when Aachen's allied installed mayor Franz Oppenhoff was shot because of collaboration.

Which consequences did these three forms of social practice have for the German borderlands in the West? First, more and more men and women were inflicted in Nazi crimes, but immediately after the defeat in May 1945, most of them claimed to have behaved in an "apolitical" manner. Second, a widespread self-victimization emerged because running fights at the Western front were only seen as forced from above. Third, the population's structure within the German borderlands changed rapidly and different conflicts between the evacuees and the old inhabitants arose. As a result of ARLZ-policy, fourth, a significant part of infrastructure as well in the occupied countries as in the German borderlands was destroyed. Fifth, after 1945 most people assigned *Volkssturm* and *Werwolf* crimes to Nazi psychopaths while ignoring the high degree of social militarization during the last months of the war. In the borderland's popular war memory emerging in the 1950's, sixth, foreign victims were absent,

not to speak of the Jews which had been deported and killed since 1941/42. The myth of a "German tragedy" serving collective exculpation was created.

CV

Armin Nolzen, M. A., is historian and member of the editorial board of the „Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus“ (www.beitraege-ns.com). He is currently working on a history of the Nazi Party, 1933-1945. Among his publications are Die NSDAP, der Krieg und die deutsche Gesellschaft, in: Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, vol. 9: Die deutsche Kriegsgesellschaft 1939 bis 1945, part 1: Politisierung - Vernichtung - Überleben, ed. by Jörg Echternkamp, München 2004, pp. 99-193; Charismatic Legitimation and Bureaucratic Rule. The NSDAP in the Third Reich, 1933-1945, in: German History 23 (2005), pp. 494-518, and Faschismus in Italien und Deutschland. Studien zu Transfer und Vergleich, Göttingen 2005 (co-editor). He is interested in history of fascism, totalitarianism, and education.

About the project *Akkers van Margraten* (Fields of Margraten) – Netherlands

'*Akkers van Margraten*' is a collaborative between the 'Stichting Samenwerkende Heemkunde-Organisaties Margraten (SHOM) and 'Ruim Kader Filmproductions'.

The project is part of a Dutch nationwide project of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, called '*Erfgoed van de Oorlog*' (Heritage of the war), and is part of a sub-project called '*Ooggetuigen Verhalen*' (Stories of eyewitnesses). The project started as a result of the notion that the number of eyewitnesses of WWII rapidly decreases. Our team is researching what the impact was (and is till today) to the community of Margraten (1200 inhabitants in 1944) of the fact that good agricultural soil was 'given' to the US Army to bury over 20.000 soldiers, killed in WWII. Did daily life change in the agricultural community and if so, in what way? A lot is known already about the establishment of this cemetery, especially due to the book '*Crosses in the Wind*' by Joseph Shomon, the former commanding officer of the 611th Graves Registration Compagny, the unit that established the cemetery in November 1944. The book however mainly exposes the military and strategic elements and logistic problems, seen from the American point of view.

Recording these stories (mostly in local dialect) offers a unique opportunity to preserve a special part of WWII-history for future generations.

Finding Eyewitnesses

By publicity in local papers, radio and TV, a presentation in the home for elderly, but also by asking around, we got in touch with the 'eyewitnesses'. Next step was to 'screen' the people by visiting them. This was necessary to get a brief idea about things they had to share and to probe their interest for the project. From time to time we present everyone involved a 'newsletter' to inform them about the progress of the project. We also have publication space in the local newspaper.

Some notes on the team:

We have chosen to work in a small team of 5. It consists of a two members of the local historical society (SHOM), a communication consultant, a film crew of two: a documentary maker (who understands the dialect) and a heritage historian / documentary maker. The interviews took place in the local dialect, one in Dutch and one in German (formerly prisoner of war). All the interviews are translated (on paper) out of the dialect into Dutch. One of the team-members did research in the various archives in the Netherland and in the US.

Schedule

November 2008: 28 interviews in the region have been completed. In this month the filmcrew will interview another 8 persons in the US..

Spring 2009: all interviews will be delivered to the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, together with transcriptions in Dutch, to be placed in a National Digital Database..

September 2009: The documentary film based on the interviews and research will be released.

Speakers

Two members of our team will each speak 10 minutes during the workshop.

The first is:

Frans Roebroeks. He is an archivist at the 'Regionaal Historisch Centrum Limburg and chairman of the 'Stichting Samenwerkende Heemkundeorganisaties Margraten' (SHOM), the initiator of the project 'Akkers van Margraten'. He will speak about the planning and goals of this project.

As second speaker:

Albert Elings, heritage-historian and price-winning documentary maker. He will talk about the results of the interview-project. (For more information about him, see his CV sent as attachment).

Please also visit our website: www.akkersvanmargraten.nl For the nation wide project 'Erfgoed van de Oorlog': www.minvws.nl/dossiers/erfgoed-van-de-oorlog/

Jens Lohmeier

Rest in Peace – German War Cemeteries in the Hürtgenwald

In the late phase of the second world war the fighting came back to the country from where it started. Four and a half years after the invasion of France and through Belgium and the Netherlands, allied troops crossed the German border in the west. The battle of the Hürtgen forest took place. This area was the scene of the longest battle on the western front. The fighting lasted from September 1944 till February 1945. The battlefield is a quite big one, reaching from the villages south of Aachen down to villages in the east of Monschau next to the Rur-dams. All this is close to the border towards Belgium. Some parts of the battle took place around the border itself. The vicinity to the border did not influence the fighting, because the Germans had occupied the Belgium border-region after 1940. After the war the biggest part of the battlefield still lay in Germany. The border had no direct influence on the following tide of events, but in some indirect ways.

After the end of the war, the inhabitants came back from evacuation to their destroyed homes and fields, full of mines, ammunition and the many dead bodies, which were left from the fighting. The conversion from this battlefield back to a normal landscape took place in the following years. Interesting points in these years after the war are the mine clearing and especially the recovering of the dead, which showed many differences in the handling of the American and the German dead. These events lead to the disposing of the two German war cemeteries on the old battlefield. These cemeteries and a few old concrete buildings like bunkers are nearly the only things left behind from the battle, which are still visible today.

The battle of the Hürtgen forest is not well known within the German population. The important battles of the Second World War in the collective German mind are the battle for Stalingrad, the "Invasion" in Normandy and in less momentous the fighting in the Ardennes 1944 and for Berlin 1945. The Hürtgen forest, the longest and heaviest battle on the western front, is nearly forgotten. The German remembrance of the battle, if at all, is a local phenomenon. How does the remembrance culture of the Germans look like?

Most of the remembrance is concentrated around the two cemeteries. At the "Volkstrauertag", a national day to remember the dead of war and violence of all nations. Local groups like the Eifelverein and regional groups of supra-regional organizations like the Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge are organizing this day on the cemeteries. Also neo-Nazi groups use this day to express their kind of remembrance culture of the battle and the war on the cemeteries.

This part of the memorization is concentrated on the dead. The veterans of the 116. Panzer-Division, which fought in the Hürtgen forest, are also involved in the memorization of the battle. They have their own memorial next to the cemetery in Vossenack and remember their dead in an independent ceremony. Beside this there is also a remembrance culture in the literature. Some books of mostly disputable quality were published by local issuers, while reputable historians often don't mention the battle. This leads to a view on the battle that is mostly ruled by German veterans of the fightings in 1944/45.

The last part of the lecture concerns with the information we can get from the dead soldiers. A list of the dead buried on the two cemeteries, erected by the management of the cemeteries, include many information about the dead like dates and places of birth and death and informations about the units they were serving in when they died. These informations create a picture of the soldiers who were involved in the battle. They show their composition as a multilayer social group and point out, that this group was very heterogeneous as well as in origin or age.

Jens Lohmeier studied history, economic and social history and political science at the University of Aachen. He just finished his thesis for M.A. degree about the dead of the battle of the Hürtgen forest.

National community, border region and transnational mobility in family recollections of Second World War (Renée Wagener)

This paper will reflect first results, in the field of Second World War, of the research project "Collective experiences and intergenerational memory : peasants, workers, immigrants and war witnesses in Luxembourg". The project analyses the transmission of memory between three generations of chosen families (based on the transcription of open interviews) and the links or discrepancies between family memory and public memory. It has been developed in close cooperation with the "Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen".

Based on the analysis of the interviews with three families, called on a provisional base the "Resistance Family", "The Jewish Family" and "The Collaborator Family", the question is developed what role the border played in the memory of these families and whether there are gaps between official and family memory in this regard. Could the border be described as a "realm of memory" or does it on the contrary play an insignificant role in the family recollections? In this context, the following aspects are explored:

1. The differences, after the Second World War, between those three families concerning their coming to terms with the experience of war, occupation, escape resp. exile;
2. Linked to this and more specifically, the recollection of forced integration into the German Wehrmacht;
3. The experience of transnational mobility due to the war
4. The handling of the contrasting concepts of national identity and European construction.

In Luxembourg, the master narrative of national solidarity during and after World War 2 is put into question by the more or less open conflicts between the representatives of resistance and forced recruitment groups who fought over the entitlement of the latter to claim a victim status, conflict that has lived on since the end of the War until today. But the interviews reveal that this uniform official version of history also contrasts with the war and post war family memories.

Besides the assessments of the war witnesses on the different attitudes of Luxembourgish people towards the Nazi oppressor as well as on the Germans and on how to deal with them after the War, the interviews reveal a more general attitude towards the War experience itself. The witnesses depict the war period as chapter in their life that was closed when war was over.

Whereas for them, the question seems to be more about coping with their own suffering and about forgiving, the next generations are much more focussed on trying to understand the different positions of Luxembourgish people and of the former enemies. One consequence of the end of Second World War, Luxembourg's independence in a EU context, is however a subject that seems to preoccupy all three generations in similar ways.

Renée Wagener, born in 1962, has obtained her Magistra Artium in social sciences in 1997 at Fernuniversität Hagen. Since 2007, she is a member of the research project "Expériences collectives, mémoires intergénérationnelle et constructions identitaires: Témoins de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, mondes paysan et ouvrier, immigrants au Luxembourg". In close cooperation with the Center for Interdisciplinary Memory Research, KWI Essen, this project explores the transmission of familial memory between three generations.

At the University of Luxembourg, she has also contributed to the development of the new research project "Partizip : Nationenbildung und Demokratie: die Auseinandersetzung um Partizipation in Luxemburg von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs (1789-1940)". In the field of contemporary history, she has published articles on the political participation of women as well as on political participation and nation building in Luxembourg. For the University of Nijmegen, Renée Wagener is taking part in the project "Quing" on gender+ equality policy in EU. She is also working as a journalist and as an independent researcher, trainer and moderator.

War-Related Tourism in Germany and its Western Neighbours. Comparative Studies in Locations, Concepts, Visitors and Chances.

While visiting sites of death and atrocity has a long touristic tradition, astonishingly the research in war-related tourism has not. This has caused significant conceptual confusion. This paper discusses the term war-related tourism as an aspect of dark tourism.

The origins of dark tourism can be traced back into the 19th century when changes of traveler motives from premodern journey to (post)modern tourism, first lines of mass tourism and changes in attitude to death created a new kind of tourism.

Attracted by several military cemeteries, battlefields and memorials of World War I throughout northern France and Belgium, tourists were, at the first time on a large scale, travelling to the stages of war. Here they could commemorate their fallen family members or comrades-in-arms or learn about the process of warfare during the Great War. Similar to World War I this recurred also after World War II. Owing to the fact of the development of international air traffic this time a lot of Northamericans joined the military tourists.

Today World War II is more than sixty years back and the number of tourists visiting these places out of personal reasons are decreasing, so that nowadays visitors of war-related attractions are mainly leisure tourists. These tourists encounter a touristical infrastructure out of military cemeteries, battlefields, monuments, architectural remains of the war, such as fortresses and walls, and a vast number of museums, mostly originated from collector's passion of private individuals. These museums can be differentiated with regard to their form of interpretation which is either limited or multidimensional.

With a closer look on the border regions some remarkable differences in war-related tourism can be revealed, especially between Germany and its western neighbours. The most important one is the influence of World War II on cultural identity and heritage. On one side there are the perpetrators of the Nazi Regime and the eventual defeated and on the other side you find their victims and eventual victors, liberated by allied troops. This leads to different perspectives in looking back on World War II. These different points of view influence the number of locations and visitors, the visitor structure and the type of concept in war-related tourism.

In viewing and treating the border regions as a whole they can be interpreted as one region with dissonant heritage. This implies chances and risks. Chances lie in presenting the border lands as an integrative cultural landscape with its different remnants of war each telling a small part of the whole story and in stressing that nowadays these regions are peacefully

integrated in the European Union. Risks lie in the different political jurisdictions of each country.

To present the border regions as an integrative cultural landscape of war there is the need of an accepted management of this integrative process.

Florian Wöltering is 29 years old, a self-employed cartographer and currently studying economic geography, economic and social history and sociology at the RWTH Aachen. In his final thesis for M.A. degree he will write about battlefield tourism as a phenomena of symbolic regionalization.

Christiane Keim

Dealing with contested legacies – border fortifications of the Second World War as subjects of a transnational art-educational project

The remains of the fortification lines stretching along the borders of Germany, France, Luxemburg and Belgium (West Wall, Maginot Line) still mark the landscape in unique and distinctive ways. At the same time the collective memory of these architectures of war remains contaminated by powerful myths and hegemonic narratives that have obstructed the development of a multifaceted perspective on the subject.

The lasting importance of the fortification lines as sites of memory and their spatiality form the background for a project launched in the context of the Europäische Kulturhauptstadtjahr (European Capital of Culture) 2007. Conducted on the basis of a border-crossing cooperative partnership between academic and social institutions *Erinnerungsräume. Architekturen des Krieges in Trier und der Großregion* (*Sites/Spaces of memory. Architectures of war in Trier and the Greater Region*) connected art and design students from Epinal, Metz (France), Liège (Belgium) and Trier (Germany); artists' groups and social initiatives located in Trier also participated in the workshops.

Proceeding from issues like (group/national) identity and (shifting) social milieus students were required to deal with the controversial cultural legacy by making the architectures focal points of an artistic approach. The results of the workshops were since shown in a number of exhibitions and are to be published within the current year.

The paper will summarize the theoretical concept of the project expressed in the key term *Erinnerungsräume*. Moreover it will inform about students' work by showing two examples and pointing out their potential significance for the further treatment of the remains as well as for a transnational cultural dialogue.

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