

International workshop: **Gender Relationships between Occupiers and Occupied during the Allied Occupation of Germany (1945-1955)**

Date and venue: 6-7 June 2019, Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Germany)



*British soldiers chatting to German girls, 16 July 1945. (Wikimedia Commons)*

There is currently a renewed interest in the Allied occupation of Germany after 1945 and in military occupation in general. Concerning the occupation of Germany after 1945, there is a lot of work dedicated to its economic, political and cultural dimensions. More oriented towards the "history from below", current research questions the daily life of military occupation, the places and forms of encounters between occupiers and occupied, covering a whole range of interactions from conflicts or confrontations to various forms of cooperation or fraternization. This type of questioning highlights actors to whom historiography from above is often blind: ordinary soldiers, the civilian population, improvised mediators, men, women, and children.

At the same time, a historiographical trend is developing, which observes the social and cultural history of war phenomena, including transition periods such as war entries and ends of war. More recently, the history of bodies, emotions and sensitivities in wartime has been explored. While the centenary of the First World War was an opportunity to make progress on this front, much remains to be done on the Second World War. Waged as an all-out war, it has affected sensitivities, bodies, and emotions in a particularly sensitive way.

On the basis of these two observations, we wish to converge these trends in the workshop "Gender Relationships between Occupiers and Occupied during the Allied Occupation of Germany (1945-1955)". With regard to annexation, military occupation "introduc[es] the notion of greater protection for populations under the control of a foreign

army".<sup>1</sup> While during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, customary rules governed occupations, the Hague Convention of 1907 defined the concept, and imposed on the occupying army the task of maintaining order in keeping with the laws in effect in the occupied country. The Geneva Conventions of 1949, supplemented by the 1977 Protocols, then emphasized the protection of individuals. Nevertheless, "the reality of military occupations is generally marked by violence against populations"<sup>2</sup> and often even begins with a regime of terror, which then gives way to appeasement and a more controlled regime.

In this wide gap between protection and violence, we wish to study the modalities of non-voluntary cohabitation implied by the military occupation in Germany after 1945. By cohabitation, we mean both material cohabitation, which implies the reorganization of spaces (stationing of ordinary soldiers in schools, inns, etc.; requisition of houses, apartments or rooms for officers; places of supply and entertainment reserved for occupiers, etc.), and physical cohabitation between male occupiers, winners and holders of many privileges, and occupied of both sexes, defeated and in a situation of legal, economic, and moral inferiority. As a result, the relationship between occupiers and occupied is by definition based on a fundamental inequality between the two parties and characterized by the superiority of the occupiers over the occupied.

The workshop aims to answer the following questions in particular:

- What types of interactions took place between the men of the occupying troops and the Germans?
- What types of relationships between men - members of the Allied occupation - and local women did the military occupation framework allow? Has the non-voluntary promiscuity in cases of shared housing with the occupier encouraged fraternisation or, on the contrary, stirred up resentment?
- How have military administrations reacted to the many violations of the ban on fraternization and to what extent have they intervened in this area?
- Under what circumstances have acts of sexual violence occurred, and to what extent have they been punished? Has there been any recognition of this specific experience of war violence?
- Beyond the gender category, what categories (nationality, ethnicity, age, social origin, military rank, urban or rural population, religion, etc.) influenced the relationship between occupiers and occupied and how?
- What were the views of the post-war societies on the relationship between the occupiers and the occupied and with what consequences?
- How were women who have given birth to a "child of the occupation" as a result of either rape or consensual sexual intercourse perceived and treated in post-war German society?

Proposals addressing methodological or conceptual aspects are welcome, as well as case studies and studies comparing areas with each other.

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<sup>1</sup> Frédéric DESSBERG, « Occupation Regimes and Logic », *Encyclopédie pour une histoire nouvelle de l'Europe* [online], 2016, published 18/09/2017, consulted 09/12/2018. Permalink

: <http://ehne.fr/en/node/1084>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

The workshop is a Franco-German initiative and aims to bring together experts on the Allied occupation in Germany after 1945. This call for contributions is addressed to young and experienced researchers. The travel and accommodation expenses of the speakers will be covered. The working language is English.

Proposals for contributions, containing a title and a short description (400 words), accompanied by a short CV (max. one page), should be sent by 1 February 2019 to: [anne-laure.briatte@sorbonne-universite.fr](mailto:anne-laure.briatte@sorbonne-universite.fr)

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