

SYMPOSIUM
*The Defeat of the Central Powers:
Experiences and Legacies of 1918*



7-8 November 2009

University College Dublin

The organisers and directors of this Symposium wish to publicly acknowledge and express their sincere gratitude to the following for their generous support and sponsorship of this event:
The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences; The European Research Council; The Austrian Embassy; The German Embassy; The Turkish Embassy; University College Dublin, School of History & Archives; The Irish-Austrian Society;
Dr. & Mrs. Otto Glaser and Mr. Paul Dubsy.

Declan M. Downey, Robert Gerwarth & William Mulligan, UCD School of History & Archives

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A Summary of The Symposium's Objectives

In view of the Ninetieth Anniversary of the End of World War I last year and the general focus on the experiences of the victors, this dedicated symposium is unprecedented in the English-speaking world of Académie and it is most innovative in that it will highlight “the other side” of the History of the events of 1918-'19 and its aftermath: the immediate response of the defeated.

In the autumn of 1918, after four years of fighting, Germany sued for peace. The failure of the spring 1918 offensive, the declining morale of the army, the fracturing of national cohesion, and the collapse of its allies, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire brought home to the military and political leadership that the war had been lost. On 11 November an armistice ended the fighting on the western front, the decisive theatre of the conflict.

Beyond the bald fact of defeat, however, lie many important questions. This symposium will examine the experiences, legacies, and meanings of defeat for Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria, highlighting common themes and different trajectories. It will attempt, for the first time, to move beyond a nation-centric understanding of defeat and the parallel experiences of revolution and imperial disintegration through a comparative and/or transnational approach.

At first glance, it is evident that defeat had a catastrophic impact on the Central Powers. Three empires collapsed, their successor states were plagued by revolution and sometimes, civil war and they suffered severe economic dislocation. The ‘shatter zones’

of empire became the sites for violent conflicts over issues that the war had raised but not settled, conflicts that persisted long after the formal end of hostilities in November 1918.

Yet the populations of the defeated states experienced defeat in very different ways; defeat had different connotations in different situations; the legacies of 1918 were highly diverse and often contradictory. While defeat brought about a number of individual and collective crises, it also offered opportunities for national renewal.

The Symposium will endeavour to address the following general questions:

- 1) What are the common patterns (and structural differences) in the experiences and legacies of defeat in 1918?
- 2) Were there distinctive national 'cultures of defeat' in each of the Central Powers, and if so, what made them distinctive?
- 3) Why were some of the defeated states less affected by post-war violence and ethnic cleansing than others?
- 4) How was defeat absorbed into post-war politics and with what consequences?
- 5) Why was 'revisionism' more pronounced in some defeated states than others?

The Symposium is open to a scholarly audience of academics, postgraduate students independent researchers and individuals who are interested in the field. For all organizational matters, please contact the Administrator of the UCD Centre for War Studies, Dr Christina Griessler: Christina.Griessler@ucd.ie

Registration Details

All who are interested in attending the Symposium are very welcome. To help defray costs, a Registration Fee of €10 (€5 concessions), will apply (excluding Speakers and Sponsors). This fee includes refreshments (tea/coffee) and programmes.

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**Saturday, 7 November : University College Dublin, Newman Building,
Belfield, The History Boardroom, K114**

1.30pm – Registration

1.45pm – Inauguration & Welcome: Professor Mary Daly, MRIA
Principal of the College of Arts & Celtic Studies, University College Dublin

2:00pm – 3:30pm The Ottoman Empire
Chair: Ugur Umit Ungor (UCD)

Edhem Eldem (Harvard / Boğaziçi University), *Uses and abuses of the Ottoman Past in Republican Turkey*

Altay Cengizler (Harvard), *The Ever Favored Pain: Turkey, From the Balkan Wars to the Entry into the First World War and the march towards the Republic*

Ryan Gingeras (Lafayette College, New York): *Anatolia's Stunde Null: 1918-19 and the Fracturing of History in Asia Minor*

3:30pm – 4:00pm Coffee Break

4:00pm – 5:30pm Bulgaria & The Balkans
Chair: Richard Crampton (Oxford)

Nikolai Vukov (Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia),
Experiences and Legacies of Defeat in Bulgaria

Paul Newman (University College Dublin), *Opposing "Liberation and Unification": Cultures of Defeat in the Balkans*

6:00pm–7.00pm Austrian Wine Reception in the University Staff Common Room

**Sunday, 8 November: The Merrion Hotel, Dublin,
The Wellington Room**

9:00am – 10:30am Austria-Hungary

Chair: Declan M. Downey (UCD)

Klaus Koch (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), “*What remains is Austria*”

Balázs Apor (Trinity College Dublin), *Perceptions and Myths of the Trianon treaty in Hungary*

10:30am-11:00am coffee break

11:00am – 12:30pm Germany

Chair: Robert Gerwarth (UCD)

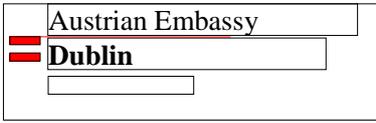
Martin Kohlrausch (Bochum), *The Irresponsible Monarch. Wilhelm II and the Legacy of World War I*

Boris Barth (Bremen), *The German defeat and the ‘stab-in-the-back’ legend*

Ferdinand Prinz zur Lippe (TCD): *The Principality of Lippe and its response to the events of 1918: some local cultural considerations*

12:30pm - 1:00pm General Discussion & Conclusion.

Chaired by William Mulligan (UCD)



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