



Call for Papers

Unknown fronts – The “Eastern Turn” in First World War history

University of Groningen, 5/6 November 2015.

Introduction

On November 5/6, 2015, the [University of Groningen](http://www.universityofgroningen.nl) will host a conference about the South Eastern and Eastern European theatre of the First World War. Since the fall of Communism and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, many unknown sources in the archives of different Eastern European countries have become available for international scholars. When in 2013 Christopher Clark published his book *The Sleepwalkers*, he presented apparently unknown details from the South-Eastern and Eastern-European theatres of the prelude to the First world war to a large, partly un-academic reading public. It goes without saying that these new findings provoked historical debates in academic circles both in the East and the West of Europe. The Clark-controversy turned out to be not a coincidence, as it seems we can speak of an “Eastern Turn” in First World War historiography. The iconic image of the Western Front’s trenches, made famous in cinematography and war poetry, can be revised and redefined. In the process of European integration, additional attention should be paid to the Eastern battlefields and home fronts of the Great War, both in historiography as well as in the culture and politics of memory.

Questions

The main aim of the conference is to give a number of scholars from both Western and Eastern Europe the opportunity to share their thoughts, ideas, and research findings about source material of the different Eastern fronts in the First World War. Questions that will be dealt with are: Where are new sources to be found? What is the methodology used in researching such sources? What has been researched, and what not? How to connect the different historiographies of Europe?

Structure

The program of the two-day conference has three thematic clusters. Because the over-arching focus of the conference is source material, the clusters are about methods and methodology in the research of different kinds of sources. The first cluster is about **1) diplomacy** and will deal with diplomatic sources. The second cluster is about **2) life stories**, diaries, biographies and other individual sources. The third cluster is about **3) audiovisual sources** and other media-related sources, such as photography, film, newspapers and journals.

Suggestions for topics

- Diplomatic relations in Eastern, Central and Southeastern Europe before and during the First World War
- Lobbying of Eastern, Central and Southeastern European nations (Czechoslovaks, Poles, Croats, Bulgarians, etc.) in the West, before and during the First World War
- Historiographic controversies in Central and Eastern Europe about the First World War, during and after the time of communism
- Research of diaries, life stories, letters, poems and biographies (methodology, coordination)
- Film, audio, theater, journalism, poetry, literature, music
- International collaboration in researching the First World War in Central and Eastern Europe
- We welcome other topics/approaches related to the above mentioned.

Guidelines for submission

We welcome individual proposals for a 15 -minute presentations. We strongly support lively and stimulating presentations and recommend all applicants to make use of film, media and images. Please include the following information with your proposal:



- Title of the paper
- Abstract (200-300 words)
- Name and institutional affiliation
- Short CV
- Contact details

The deadline for submission is: May 10th, 2015.

The proposals should be sent to: UnknownFronts@rug.nl

For more information: www.UnknownFronts.org

Organization (information and [contact](#))

- Dr. E. Agoston-Nikolova (Formerly department of Slavic Studies – University of Groningen)
- N.A. Kraft van Ermel, MA (Netherlands-Russia Centre – University of Groningen)
- Drs. G.C. van Hengel (Department of Contemporary History – University of Groningen)
- Prof. Dr. J.S.A.M. van Koningsbrugge (Department of Modern History – University of Groningen).