

## **Humans in Motion: War Crisis and Refugees in Europe 1914-1923 [Updated]**

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### **Call for Papers**

### **Humans in Motion: War Crisis and Refugees in Europe 1914-1923**

### **An International Conference and Research Workshop**

**Kraków, June 29 - July 1, 2022**

**Organiser:** Institute of History, Jagiellonian University; ZRC SAZU, Milko Kos Historical Institute

**Venue:** Jagiellonian University, Kraków; field trip to historical sites throughout Małopolska

**Date:** June 29 - July 1, 2022 (Wednesday-Friday)

**Application deadline:** February 1, 2022

**Notification:** February 15, 2022

**Form of abstracts:** electronic file (doc, docx, pdf), up to 300 words

**Applications to be sent to:** [kamil.ruszala@uj.edu.pl](mailto:kamil.ruszala@uj.edu.pl) (Kamil Ruszala); [petra.svoljsak@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:petra.svoljsak@zrc-sazu.si) (Petra Svoljšak)

**Working language:** English

The refugee crisis has accompanied people in every era of the past. The current migration crisis on the European continent is not something completely unknown: changing borders and people on the move remain permanent, though forgotten, part of the past and heritage. This makes the problem of war refugees part of the public discourse and social consciousness. Lessons from past refugee crises teach us something about the mechanisms - as it turns out, unchanged for centuries - of state policy and human behaviour when prejudices and stereotypical views collide with migrants/refugees (different contexts but similar attitudes?). Therefore, studying refugeedom is also an attempt to understand contemporary problems from a historical perspective.

To date researchers have studied the issue of war refugees, focusing on specific regions, areas of the former empires that collapsed in 1918; specific refugee groups (with different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds); the reaction between refugees and locals (hosts); refugee policies of authorities at central (state) and local levels, etc. Nevertheless, there are still many unexplored problems related to the forgotten history of anonymous masses of people - mostly average citizens in exile who were overshadowed by the major political events of the First World War and the shaping of

a new post-imperial order. The goal is to create a common narrative comparing the war experiences of civilians on the run and the politics and attitudes towards them from different areas of the European continent.

The organizers invite researchers to Kraków who study war refugees in the first decades of the twentieth century. The focus of the planned conference is on comparative transnational perspectives, which will make an important contribution to international learning. Previous work has rarely compared the refugee experience in a broader context (with some exceptions), mainly from an East-West perspective, and therefore there is no single European narrative of this human experience from over a hundred years ago. Therefore, the conference debate (and subsequent conference proceedings) will include a comparison of the experiences of war refugeedom on the Eastern Front, the Italian Front, the Western Front, the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Front, the Baltic Region, etc., from 1914 to 1920. The aim of the conference is the integration of the research communities, academic infrastructures, and the local institutions and individual scholars representing different fields. The conference will allow the organizers to involve an interdisciplinary and international team of researchers working on war refugees in the first decades of the twentieth century in Europe, providing them with a place to present their research and a platform to exchange ideas and debate colleagues at different levels (PhD students, post-docs, and early career and advanced scholars) on current issues from the angle of past experience.

We are particularly interested in papers that address the following themes:

- The legal status and definition of refugees in a centennial perspective: from local to global, from the Hague Conventions to the Geneva Convention;
- Diverse group: experiences of refugees in national, religious, ethnic and gender categories
- Migration patterns: differences and similarities between different refugee experiences, inclusion vs. exclusion;
- Public health in the context of flight and the public response, stereotypes and public discourse;
- The role of the state in mitigating public discourse and responses;
- Systems of refugee assistance;
- Trajectories and displacement of refugees, including political strategies (organized infrastructure and location system) and refugees' own directions of spontaneous escape/migration;
- The analysis of state mechanisms in the face of a migration crisis (legislation, relations with local authorities, state population control, propaganda);
- The development of tools to deal with the refugee crisis after the First World War;
- The chronology of the refugee influx in comparison with the chronology of the First World War;
- Consequences of refugeedom: how did the experience influence the continent, its people and politics;
- Methodological approaches and concepts (WW1 and beyond).

Finally, there is a summary question that combines all of the previous questions: can we create a single narrative of wartime refugeedom that covers the different refugee groups of the European continent and even a broader geographical perspective? Is this theoretical experiment even possible? These are just some of the ideas on the possible research questions on the subject of refugees and displaced persons during the First World War and after the collapse of the empires and the old

system in Europe. The organizers are also looking for proposals that go beyond the above questions. The invitation to submit proposals is thus not only open to historians who are aware of the fact that migrations represent an intersection of different disciplines. The conference coordinators in Krakow and Ljubljana are attempting to create this single transnational comparative narrative that could, over time, find its place not only in a broad academic audience but also in the consciousness of the European public and in policy and decision-making. The organizers plan to publish the results of the conference in the form of a collective research monograph on the experience of migration and war flight during the First World War and the post-war years in a comparative perspective. Therefore, further meetings and seminars are planned to prepare and provide a final product in the form of a book.

The conference will be accompanied by a keynote lecture by **Prof. Peter Gatrell**, as well as by a seminar on source studies in the archives in Krakow, presenting sources on World War I refugees and forced migration. As part of our workshop we are planning a special tour of former World War I battlefields with some of the great examples of war memorials designed by famous artists and war gravesites.

Abstracts no longer than 300 words, along with contact information, name, and institutional affiliation, should be sent to [kamil.ruszala@uj.edu.pl](mailto:kamil.ruszala@uj.edu.pl) and [petra.svoljsak@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:petra.svoljsak@zrc-sazu.si). The deadline for abstract submission is **February 1, 2022**, and the full list of speakers will be announced in **early February 2022**. The conference will be held in Kraków in **June 29 - July 1, 2022**.

The organizers will cover the cost of accommodation, conference materials, participation in the planned excursion, refreshments, and lunch.

#### Organizing Committee

Petra Svobljšak, ZRC SAZU, Milko Kos Historical Institute ([petra.svoljsak@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:petra.svoljsak@zrc-sazu.si))

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