

Call for Papers (by invitation only)

“The Global Environmental History of World War I in Perspective”

Dates: 4–5 August 2014

Location: Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA

Conveners: John McNeill, Martin Schmid, and Richard Tucker

This workshop will mark the centennial of the outbreak of the 1914–1918 cataclysm that extended industrial warfare to a global scale; it will examine the complex environmental dimensions of the war. World War I is often called the first “total war,” engulfing entire populations. Although warfare frequently battered civilians as well as warriors throughout history, industrialization escalated the scale and intensity of warfare to unprecedented levels. In the mid-nineteenth century industrial warfare emerged in both Europe and the United States, as precursors of the “Great War” of 1914–1918.

But the underlying environmental dimensions of industrialized warfare have not yet been systematically studied. Environmental historians have lately studied the American Civil War, but with few exceptions the European wars of the mid-nineteenth century have not been studied in terms of their environmental dynamics and impacts. Similarly, the environmental dimensions of World War I have been considered only in fragments.

This workshop can make a major contribution to our understanding of warfare, including the natural world as well as human societies. It will discuss the environmental dynamics of the war across not only the regions of intensive conflict in Europe, Mesopotamia, Africa, and the Pacific, but also the wide regions that provided critical resources for combatant militaries. Though it will focus on World War I, it will also consider the broader context of its precursors and legacies. It will bring together researchers from many disciplines and diverse subject matters, with the goal of generating an integrated understanding of the war’s impact on environments and natural resources around the world.

Themes may include:

- . The uses of nature: damage to landscapes and water resources; exploitation of critical natural resources; food and agriculture; new uses of natural products, forests as refuge
- . Short-term vs. long-term consequences; post-war recovery and reconstruction

- . Ways the war changed the course of industrialization, including new weapons, escalating materials and energy use, and mass consumption
- . Perceptions of nature; the ways military strategy changed how we perceive nature; cultural constructions of the natural world

The two-day workshop will be held in English. Discussions will be based on pre-circulated papers (about 5,000 to 7,000 words) that have not been published nor are currently under consideration for publication. They will be due a month before the conference. Proposed titles and abstracts for papers (400–600 words) and a short (2–3pp maximum) CV should be submitted by email, **no later than 1 January 2013**, to: conferences@carsoncenter.lmu.de.

The workshop is organized jointly by the Rachel Carson Center in Munich and Georgetown University. Travel and local costs for participants will be covered.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact any of the conveners:

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