

IN THIS ISSUE

All of the three longer essays in the present issue look at the role of soldiers in contemporary history after 1945 – not, however, from a military history perspective in the narrower sense, but in terms of the public's estimation of armies. The extreme violence of World War II meant that military action required new legitimization after the war, but it was also generally conceded that establishing a stable order would not be possible without armies. While the key military challenge in the Europe of 1945 was in the first instance to control a defeated Germany, the fissures of the Cold War soon brought to the fore new functions of the military and new arenas of violence within and between states. We have already published a number of case studies on wartime violence and a methodological debate on ›Military history as contemporary history‹ in an earlier special issue (ZF 1/2005: Wars after the Second World War). The articles in this current ›open‹ edition now spotlight some aspects of soldiers' activities in their political, social, cultural and legal constellations, both in warfare and in other domains as well.

One direct consequence of the occupation of Germany at the end of World War II was the heavy presence of Allied soldiers in a divided Berlin, along with privileges that essentially continued to be enjoyed until 1990. As *Stefanie Eisenhuth* shows, US soldiers in particular were visiting East Berlin in their thousands each year. The State Security and People's Police of the GDR could only keep a wary eye on their (shopping) behaviour, being powerless to regulate it. On closer inspection, what might at first seem a curious form of tourism (and does indeed involve some bizarre episodes) is a rich source of information on ›routinisation in daily life under division‹ (Eisenhuth). Routines of a very different nature developed from as early as 1959 in the German armed forces. *Patrick Merziger* traces how the new West German army was also involved in activities beyond its narrower defence mission at an early stage, providing disaster relief in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Central and South America. The number of such ›out-of-area‹ operations is remarkable. And it is also striking that until German reunification, there was little controversy about the legal status and the costs it entailed. The topos of ›serving humanity‹ ensured a high degree of acceptance across party lines, even when the boundary to combat operations was sometimes fragile, and constitutional legitimization also required a certain elasticity. The question Merziger raises about the continuity of operations by the German armed forces before and after 1991/92 will certainly merit further discussion. In a case study on Canada, *Jan Erik Schulte* explores how military and social identities were redefined at the end of the Cold War. With particular reference to the planning and implementation of the Peacekeeping Monument in Ottawa, he traces how the United Nations and the concept of peace acquired greater prominence in domestic politics. Since the 1990s, however, the symbolism has no longer been matched by any real commitment: in the list of countries providing troops for UN peacekeeping missions, Canada (unlike before) now ranks near the bottom.

The search for a sustainable global order has remained a fundamental quest throughout the 20th century and into the present day, precisely because of the hopes that have frequently been disappointed. There was massive public interest in the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the war in 1914, and the forthcoming anniversaries marking the end of the war in 1918/19 can likewise be expected to attract considerable attention. Having presented a roundtable discussion in this journal in 2014,¹ we are now publishing an essay by *Ewald Frie*, who clears a path through recent research debates and tendencies in the culture of remembrance as he reflects on ›1918/19: 100 Years On‹. (This piece is published in German in the print journal; in the online edition it is also available in English.) Frie highlights the greater context of the years 1916/17–1923, because for many countries and regions, 1918/19 marked a transition to new violence. At the same time, he recommends that the different perceptions of the world, possible courses of action and ›scripts‹ of the contemporary actors in their heterogeneity be taken seriously as a methodological challenge – not only on special anniversaries.

The question ›Do we need anniversaries?‹, along with complaints about ›museomania‹ or ›retrophilia‹,² has come to be as regular as it is predictable. The call for a ›critical evaluation of the ever more apparent numerative turn in historical scholarship‹ was made in 2008,³ and not for the first time. Critical and self-critical reflection on attention economies of the historical remains an important task, but it should be managed with the necessary pragmatism – not every anniversary requires an extensive metareflection. Some may note the absence of an article in this issue on the subject of ›1968: 50 Years On‹. We have broadly documented the many works that have been and are still being written about the student movement, its background and its impact in a bibliography (including reviews) on the website.⁴ The present issue looks at other areas, each of which is, in its own way, at least as topical and relevant to research.

Jan-Holger Kirsch for the editorial team
(Translated from the German by Joy Titheridge)

1 Santanu Das/Gerhard Hirschfeld/Heather Jones/Jennifer Keene/Boris Kolonitskii/Jay Winter, Global Perspectives on World War I. A Roundtable Discussion, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 11 (2014), pp. 92-119.

2 Norbert Furrer, Brauchen wir Jubiläen?, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 30 January 2018.

3 Marie Luisa Allemeyer et al., Editorial: fünfzig!, in: *WerkstattGeschichte* 50 (2008), pp. 3-4, here p. 3.

4 <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/sites/default/files/medien/material/Rezensionen_68erPDF.pdf>.