ENMITY, LOYALTY, EMPIRE AND NATION:
LANGUAGES IN THE GREAT WAR

Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Social Science History, Vienna
Centre for War Studies, Trinity College Dublin
26 March 2015
Hoey Theatre: The Long Room Hub / IIIS seminar room
During the Great War, communicating across language barriers became important for several reasons. Languages were classified in the light of wartime antagonisms, those of the enemy being associated with “disloyalty” or worse, those of allies with loyalty and shared values. Language was (ab)used for propaganda and new words (“war jargon”) were borrowed from foreign languages. There was also a practical side to the role of languages. Some imperial armies (Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian) were long used to dealing with soldiers speaking many different tongues. But both camps engaged in coalition warfare with armies of different nationalities and working in foreign languages. Both camps also found themselves in occupation (whether ‘friendly’ or ‘enemy’) of areas where the civil populations spoke different languages (British and Germans in France, French, British and Germans on opposite sides in Macedonia etc.). Languages therefore played an important part in the European theatres of the Great War as well as in the Middle East and the colonial sphere. While this was not a new phenomenon, having been of significance in the previous continent-wide conflict during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, it was especially important during the First World War, as it would be during its successor in 1939-1945, owing to the scale of the operations, their impact on civilian populations and the ways in which language was becoming a marker of national identity.

This one-day conference will bring together scholars who deal with the role of languages in crisis and war. Their papers will cover a range of contexts and case studies in different theatres of operation, in both nation states and multi-ethnic empires, and will discuss a range of communicative practices. e.g. contact interpreting and denunciation.
-WORKSHOP PROGRAMME-

14.00-14.15  Opening Remarks by the Organizers

14.15-15.00  Panel 1

Sylvie Kleinman (Trinity College Dublin): *Irish freedom in French war strategy (1793-1804): A Historical case study in military translation in the age of revolution*

15.00-15.30  Coffee Break

15.30-16.15  Panel 2

Isa Blumi (Georgia State University): *Lost in Translation: Polyglot Armies and the Dangers of Fighting an Insurgency in Ottoman Yemen*

Commentator: Dmitar Tasić (UCD/Serbian Military History Institute)

16.15-17.00  Panel 3

Tamara Scheer (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Social Science History): *Languages of Loyalty and Disloyalty in the Habsburg Empire during World War One*

Commentator: John Paul Newman (National University of Ireland, Maynooth)

17.00-17.45  Coffee Break

Venue change – IIIS Seminar Room, 6th floor Arts Building

17.45-18.30  Panel 4

Franziska Heimburger (University of Glasgow): *Friendly and/or enemy languages? Linguistic preparation of the First World War in France, Great Britain and Germany*

Commentator: William Mulligan (UCD)

18.45-19.45  Closing Address

Hilary Ann Footitt (University of Reading): *Languages at War post 1918: perspectives and methodologies*

19.45-20.15  Reception: Lobby of IIIS Seminar room. Generously provided by his Excellency, the Austrian ambassador to Ireland, Dr Thomas Nader.