

[Propaganda and Neutrality: Alternative Battleground and Active Deflection](#)

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Call for Papers

Date:

June 24, 2021

Location:

United Kingdom

Subject Fields:

Contemporary History, Cultural History / Studies, Diplomacy and International Relations, Film and Film History, Modern European History / Studies

The University of Kent's Centre for the History of War, Media and Society is organising an international conference at the Institute of Historical Research in London:

PROPAGANDA AND NEUTRALITY:ALTERNATIVE BATTLEFIELDS AND ACTIVE DEFLECTION

THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2021

Keynote speaker: Professor Jo Fox, IHR Director

WEBSITE: <https://propaganda-and-neutrality.jimdosite.com/>

Neutral states have played an important role in international history. Neutrality has often been a constitutional matter of principle, but for others it has been a political or military necessity. Neutrals have often acted as mediators, safe havens and buffers, or fallen victim to short-cuts in other states' conflicts. Others have ideologically or financially supported one side in a conflict, but have taken a stance of official non-belligerence - militarily neutral, but ideologically committed. Neutrals have also played the role of alternative battlegrounds for non-military conflicts - through means such as propaganda, rumour-spreading and espionage - either as hosts to proxy engagements between belligerent states; or through belligerent states applying pressure for neutrals to join their side in a conflict (or at least not join the other side). In the latter case belligerent states have often targeted both Governments and the wider population. However, neutral states have rarely been total bystanders in such situations. They have usually had to create policies and institutions to actively deflect pressure from those belligerent states, such as through censorship restrictions and organisations to implement those restrictions. Some have even indulged in propaganda activities of their own to make their case as to why they have remained neutral, and to counteract belligerent state propaganda.

The Conference and Call for Papers:

The 'Propaganda and Neutrality' conference, organised by the University of Kent, and taking place at the Institute of Historical Research in London on Thursday 24 June 2021, plans to explore issues around the role of propaganda in neutral states. Proposals for papers are welcome from academics and postgraduate students who are studying the role of propaganda in neutral states. Topics covered are likely to be around activities in neutral and non-belligerent states during times of military conflict - notably the First and Second World Wars such as Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey. However, the conference encourages papers about all aspects of propaganda and neutrality from any time period, primarily from around 1750 onwards, including, but not limited to, the Cold War and policies of non-alignment. Also of interest are studies of propaganda relating to states that have had a longer-term policy of neutrality that have endured both in times of war and peace, and which the policy is core to their identity, such as that of Switzerland, the Republic of Ireland and Costa Rica. The conference aims to have a good diversity of speakers and subjects.

TOPICS MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

Relation between propaganda and neutrality

Foreign propaganda policies in neutral nations (machinery, channels, objectives, repercussions, etc.)

Propaganda as instrument for incentive / prevention of belligerence

Response of the neutral nations to international propaganda

Projection and self-representation of a neutral nation

Propaganda and the justification of neutrality

Psychological warfare in neutral countries (black propaganda, rumours, propaganda for subversion, resistance or occupation)

Propaganda and espionage as a weapon of war in non-belligerent nations.

Channels to control neutral public opinion (radio, cinema, press, publications, rumours, etc.)

Cultural propaganda and neutrality

Public diplomacy and neutrality

National debate and foreign propaganda

Propaganda and censorship in neutral nations.

Instructions for submitting proposals: Proposals should be made up of an abstract of no more than 350 words for a 20 minute paper, and a short biography. All papers and proposals should be given in the English language (with courtesy English translations provided of any propaganda documents used which originate in other languages). The closing date for proposals is: 31 October 2020. The convenors aim to get back to those submitting proposals by 31 December 2020. Submission and contact email: prop.neutral.conference@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you!

As everyone will know, the world has been tackling the Covid-19 pandemic for the past few months. Whilst we hope that the situation will have improved considerably, if not be entirely back to normal, by June 2021, we recognise that there is an ongoing risk of continued disruption at the time of the conference and during preparations over the next year. We will continue to monitor the situation, but plan to develop a solution to enable people to join by video link where that might be necessary. We would probably expect any papers delivered over video link to be a little shorter (10-15 mins) compared to those delivered in the room (20 mins).

Contact Info:

-Edward Corse (main organizer):

Dr. Edward Corse, Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for the History of War, Media and Society at the University of Kent. He is the author of *A Battle for Neutral Europe: British cultural propaganda in the Second World War* (Bloomsbury, 2013).

-Marta García Cabrera:

Marta García Cabrera, PhD student and researcher at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), studying British propaganda and intelligence in Spain during the First and the Second World War. Alumnus of the University of Kent (2016).

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