



Colloquium “War and Society in 20th Century Europe”  
9-11 December 2009, Brussels

## WAR AND PROPAGANDA

Propaganda is a constitutive dimension of large-scale contemporary war. It requires the mobilization of the armies as well as of the entire population. Since World War I, propaganda has been perceived as a necessary weapon in strengthening the “home front”, in undermining the enemy’s morale and in maintaining alliances. The need for mass mobilization requires refined and effective propaganda techniques.

This panel tackles key methodological questions:

- What are the organizations that deal with propaganda in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century conflicts? How do they coordinate their information action with the military, the intelligence services, the state-private networks?
- Who are the propaganda experts? How are they recruited? What competencies and skills do they share?
- Which propaganda techniques are used in wartime? Is it possible to identify similar techniques and expertise within different forms of conflict, and between war and post-war contexts? Is there an exchange of know-how between the political, commercial and military domains?

Focusing on the techniques and the actors of propaganda rather than on its contents, this thematic session questions the variety of knowledge and heterogeneity of the expertise in the field of propaganda and how they have progressively adapted to suit different conflicts of the “short 20th Century”. This session proposes a reflexion on the transversal question of the techniques used in the domain of war propaganda and of the ruptures and continuities in this field since 1914.

- Convener:** - Irene Di Jorio (Université libre de Bruxelles)
- Participants:** - Linda Risso (University of Reading)  
- Marsha Siefert (Central European University, Budapest)  
- David Welch (University of Kent)  
- Nicola Labanca (Università di Siena)  
- Alejandro Pizarroso Quintero (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Irene DI JORIO (Université libre de Bruxelles)**

Irene Di Jorio is Professor of History of Mass Communication at the University of Brussels (ULB). She obtained her PhD in History of Europe at the Universities of Bologna and Paris X-Nanterre. Her research focuses on the history of propaganda theories and techniques in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, with particular attention to Italy and France. She is author of *Tecniche di propaganda politica. Vichy e la Légion française des combattants (1940-1944)*, Roma, Carocci, 2006 and editor, with Véronique Pouillard, of *Publicité et propagande*, thematic dossier of *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, n. 101, January-March 2009.

## **THE NATO INFORMATION SERVICE BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND PROPAGANDA, 1949-1989**

**Linda RISSO (University of Reading)**

Over the past fifteen years, the opening of archives has allowed historians to gain an advanced insight into how governments and security agencies engaged with propaganda and intelligence during the Cold War. Yet, still little is known about how international organisations, like NATO, dealt with public diplomacy and anti-communist intelligence. This paper examines the role of the NATO Information Service (NATIS) between the launch of the Atlantic Organisation and the end of the Cold War. It investigates how NATIS acted as a forum for the exchange of intelligence and information among the national delegations so to ensure that the Western countries carried out a coherent and consistent propaganda action. NATIS also carried out its own information action and this paper offers a preliminary overview of its activities, initiatives, collaborations with other agencies and private-state networks and outputs.

Linda Risso is Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of Reading. She is the author of “‘Enlightening Public Opinion’: A study of NATO’s information policies between 1949 and 1959 based on recently declassified documents”. *Cold War History* 7/1 (February 2007); “‘Don’t mention the Soviets!’: An overview of the short films produced by the NATO Information Service between 1949 and 1969”, *Cold War History* (Forthcoming, Nov. 2009); “A difficult compromise: American and European plans for NATO anti-communist propaganda and intelligence, 1947-1951”, *Intelligence and National Security* (Forthcoming). She is currently writing a monograph on the NATO Information Service for Routledge.

## **BATTLEGROUND EASTERN EUROPE: MEDIA, PROPAGANDA AND THE EARLY COLD WAR**

**Marsha SIEFERT (Central European University, Budapest)**

Fresh from the experiences of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union both recognized the role of “mass persuasion” in creating public support for their wartime policies, as well as attempting to undermine the enemy. In particular, the perceived effectiveness of radio and film influenced the continuity of techniques and the types of institutions established to propagate Cold War messages. By the late 1940s those countries located east of the Iron Curtain became a prime target for both sides. Postwar Sovietization of Eastern Europe included replicating Party-controlled Departments of Agitation and Propaganda, establishing institutions like Soviet friendship societies for “bloc building” and supporting bloc production and circulation of approved radio programs and films. Meanwhile, Western Europe housed a spearhead of the American “information war” – Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty – that enlisted East European exiles to broadcast to their “home front.” This paper will assess the continuities of propaganda between hot and cold war, including attempts by both sides to measure and claim success in inculcating their messages.

Marsha Siefert teaches in the History Department of Central European University, Budapest. Her most recent book is *Extending the Borders of Russian History* (Central European University Press, 2003); *Mass Culture and Perestroika in the Soviet Union* (Oxford University Press 1991) won a national award from the Association of American Publishers. Her research on European and Cold War culture has appeared in several books, including *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy and Anti-Americanism Since 1945* (Berghahn 2006). She has lectured at universities in Moscow, Saratov, Kostroma, Ulan Ude, L’viv, Vilnius, Chisinau, Timisoara, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Sofia, Sarajevo, and Istanbul. She was a Research Fellow at Rothermere American Institute (2007) and Senior Associate Member of St. Antony’s College (2000), both at University of Oxford. Before coming to Central European University, she was Editor of the *Journal of Communication* at the University of Pennsylvania.

**“TODAY GERMANY, TOMORROW THE WORLD.” NAZI PROPAGANDA AND TOTAL WAR, 1919-1945**

**David WELCH (University of Kent)**

This paper will examine the manner in which Joseph Goebbels' Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda mobilised the German nation for 'total war'. The war imposed considerable strains on the political, social and economic structure set up by the Nazi regime. The difficulties for propaganda were exacerbated by the distinct lack of enthusiasm for the announcement of war, compared to the kind of enthusiasm that apparently gripped the masses in 1914. A number of key themes will be examined including: Blitzkrieg; the Russian campaign; total war and promises of retaliation or 'revenge'.

David Welch is Professor of Modern History and Director of the Centre for Study of Propaganda and War at the University of Kent. He has written widely on propaganda in the twentieth century and in the Third Reich. His publications include: *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (2004); *Hitler. Portrait of a Dictator* (2002); *Germany, Propaganda and Total War, 1914-1918*. *The sins of Omission* (2000).

## **ITALY VS. AUSTRIA: REASSESSING A GREAT PROPAGANDA BATTLE OF THE GREAT WAR**

**Nicola LABANCA (Università di Siena)**

Among the great propaganda efforts of WWI, the propaganda battle between Italy and Austria deserves particular attention. In 1917-18, the Italian and Austrian-Hungarian armies fought not only with bullets and cannons but with words, leaflets etc. The most interesting aspect of this propaganda contest is that after the defeat at Caporetto, the Italian military and other civil servants received the assistance of American, British and French experts. For various reasons, this episode was quickly forgotten in post-WWI Italy by both civil servants in charge with the new fascist regime's propaganda and by the military. Yet, international scholars have investigated this episode: Philip Taylor mentions it in his influential *Munitions of the mind* (1978). Mark Cornwall devotes greater attention to it in his *The undermining of Austria-Hungary: the battle for hearts and minds* (2000). Most importantly, he includes extensive research on the Austrian side. Now, new research into Italian unpublished sources sheds new light on the cooperation between the Italians and their allies in the production of a more effective propaganda campaign and leads to a more advanced insight into the methods and results of this crucial propaganda campaign.

Nicola Labanca is professor of Contemporary History at the University of Siena. His research focuses on the history of Italian colonial expansion and on Italian military history. In the 1980s, he contributed to "War and society newsletter"; since 1994, he is part of the editorial advisory board of "War in history".

Among his publications are *Il generale Cesare Ricotti e la politica militare italiana (1884-1887)*, Roma, Ufficio storico SME, 1986; *Caporetto. Storia di una disfatta*, Firenze, Giunti-Castermann, 1997; *L'istituzione militare in Italia. Politica e società*, Milano, Unicopli, 2002; *Guerre contemporanee. Dal 1945 ad oggi*, Firenze, Giunti, 2008. He also edited, among others, *Repertorio degli studiosi italiani di storia militare*, Milano, Unicopli, 2005; and *Guerre vecchie, guerre nuove. Comprendere i conflitti armati contemporanei*, Milano Bruno Mondadori, 2009. He is Director of 'Centro interuniversitario di studi e ricerche storico-militari'.

## **PROPAGANDA AND FOREIGN INTERVENTION DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR**

**Alejandro PIZARROSO QUINTERO (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)**

The Spanish Civil War was followed with passion from all over the world. Not only because its evident implications in international politics or the participation of foreign volunteers, but over all because it was a reflection of the political positions in every country. The Second World War was a bigger edition of the Spanish Civil War. The media of many countries (press, radio, newsreels) gave it an enormous attention. Hundreds of correspondents came to Spain. Both sides (republicans and fascists) started a very intense activity of propaganda in many countries. Powers like Italy, Germany or the Soviet Union fought their own propaganda battle. Scientific propaganda was born in the First World War, but the Spanish Civil War meant a turning point in History of War Propaganda.

Alejandro Pizarroso Quintero is Professor of History of Communication and Director of the Department of History of Social Communication at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Between 1976 and 1979, he was professor at the Florence University and research fellow at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy – Tufts University Medford, Mass. USA (1985-86). He is specialized in Political Communication, War Propaganda and Psychological Warfare. He has given several lectures on these themes at universities in Latin America and Europe. He has also worked for the Spanish Ministry of Defense.

He is author of 18 books, more than 40 chapters in collective works and a large number of articles in different publications in Spain and abroad. His more recent books are: *Nuevas guerras, vieja propaganda (de Vietnam a Irak)*, Madrid, Cátedra, 2005; *Periodismo de guerra*, (with Pablo Sapag and Marta González), Madrid, Síntesis, 2007; *Diplomáticos, Propagandistas y espías: Estados Unidos y España en la Segunda Guerra Mundial: Información y propaganda*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2009.