



THE BATTLE FOR PEOPLE'S MINDS

INFORMATION, INTELLIGENCE AND PROPAGANDA THROUGHOUT THE CONFLICTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND TODAY

Call for papers

In the modern world, information is both a weapon of war and a primary target. Information is critically important not only for the conduct of military operations but also in the battle for people's minds—that is, in shaping public opinion. The term „information warfare” has been in use since the 1970s, but by today its significance has grown to such an extent that it is referred to as „the new face of war”—an integral and highly significant component of it. Meanwhile, assessing the credibility of information is no longer the sole domain of military analysts. It has become important for every member of society if we do not want to become manipulated without even realizing it.

The manipulation of information in the context of war is as old as war itself, and gathering intelligence on enemy forces has always been the foundation of offensive and defensive strategies. Equally ancient is the practice of sowing confusion in the enemy's ranks through rumors, or conversely, boosting the morale of one's own troops. Throughout the 20th century, in particular, with the modernization of society and rapid technological and warfare development characteristic of that century, information has taken on unprecedented importance in military conflicts.

World War I ushered in a new reality in the history of military conflict, in which not only the military but also the civilian population—the entire enemy nation—became a strategic target. One of the strategies of „total war” was to break the morale of civilian society, thereby forcing the enemy nation to withdraw from the war. The direct attacks on civilians, characteristic of the first half of the century were gradually replaced by tactics centered on the manipulation of information. In the 21st century the battle for people's minds is ongoing and we speak of „hybrid warfare”—a type of war in which the manipulation of information plays a central role and even the boundaries between war and peace are no longer clearly definable.

At the 5th Annual International Conference of the Latvian War Museum, we aim to analyze the significance of information and its manipulation in military operations in the Baltic region from various perspectives—both by looking back at the history of the 20th century and by assessing the current situation. We invite speakers to address the following topics in the history of the Baltic region and Europe:

- The use of propaganda for military purposes, including war propaganda in art and literature in the 20th century;
- The activities and role of intelligence services in wartime, in preparing for war, or in preventing potential conflicts in the 20th century;
- Propaganda after the II World War as a tool for integrating the population or minorities of occupied territories;
- The diplomatic service and its functions in gathering and analyzing information in the history of 20th century military conflicts;
- Development of mass media (press – television – internet, social networks) and their impact on the flow of information and the dissemination of propaganda in the context of military conflicts;
- The distortion and falsification of information in the public mass media in the 21st century in the Baltic region, specifically in the context of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine;
- The role of cultural institutions in strengthening information resilience today: exhibitions, research, and the reinterpretation of historical evidence as tools for fostering public awareness, critical thinking, and resistance to manipulation.

Conference languages: Latvian and English

To apply, please send your proposal to kristine.bekere@karamuzejs.lv by August 1, 2026. The application should include: first name, last name, academic degree, place of employment and position, presentation topic, and a short abstract of the presentation (250–300 words)

Notification regarding the inclusion of the paper in the conference program will be provided by August 15, 2026
For inquiries: kristine.bekere@karamuzejs.lv