

FIGHTERS IN A FOREIGN CONFLICT, 1848-1999

Centre for History of Sciences Po, Paris
Thursday 28 June 2018



The phenomenon of people choosing to leave their own country and fight in a foreign conflict is once again on the increase, as the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria remind us. The conference aims to examine this transnational trend by comparing the experiences in different countries and during different wars from the Revolutions of 1848 to the Yugoslav Wars. This period is rich with examples of foreign volunteers participating in civil wars, revolutions and inter-state conflicts. We will seek to explore the interactions between the foreigner and the host under several principal themes:

Volunteering: what were the motives behind the volunteers' personal decision to join a foreign conflict? How were they received by the host country's government, military, media and civil population? Were the volunteers helped or obstructed in their effort to reach the conflict?

Training: what were the challenges in training foreign volunteers from both the host's and the volunteers' perspectives? How were the volunteers affected by the host army's regulations concerning religion, language, hobbies, etc. and were these regulations relaxed for them? Were there prejudices and tensions? What were the factors influencing decisions on the equipping and deployment of foreign volunteers?

Combat: how did foreign volunteers perform in battle? How complete was their integration in the host's combat formations? How were they treated and perceived by both the host's high command and frontline troops, and, when taken prisoners, by the enemy? To what extent were host and guest divided (or not) on the battlefield by language, customs, food and other cultural differences? What was the role, if any, of liaison officers?

Post-war: was the contribution of the foreign volunteers officially recognised and rewarded by the host government? Did volunteers settle in the host country? Do they have a place in the public memory of the conflict in the host country and/or their homeland?

Contributions should address one of the above themes. The conference also encompasses those who participated in the war effort but were not always considered part of the military, such as, for example, civilian nurses and ambulance drivers, members of labour corps or of the merchant marine, and journalists.

We welcome proposals from all disciplines and approaches to the study of war. Proposals of 200-300 words should be sent to steven.oconnor@sciencespo.fr. **The deadline for receipt of proposals is 31 December 2017.** Conference presentations and discussions will be English. Limited funds are available to help pay for the travel expenses of participants coming from afar, such as North and South America and Asia.

Steven O'CONNOR

Guillaume PIKETTY



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 703854.