

Research Workshop – 80 Years of Peace in Europe?

Friday 16 May – 09.00 – 17.45

Leiden Campus, [Lipsius Building](#), Room 2.06

Abstract

May 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. For many in 1945, this was a moment of great hope and the imagining of a different world. The idealism of the League of Nations gave way to the creation of the United Nations. The Nuremberg Trials signalled that human rights would matter as much as the sovereignty of states. Power would be made subordinate to law, people's right to self-determination would be both recognised and realised. Once warring states would turn to international organisations rather than war to settle their differences. Sitting alongside these expectations was the reality of the Cold War world, fragmented beyond a mere East-West axis, a reminder that states still sought power and control over others. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 were again greeted with proclamations of a new world order, the human rights agenda elevated further. Fast forward to today and many of the assumptions and much that was built from 1945 are being questioned, even dismantled. In this roundtable, speakers will reflect on where we are now and how we got here.

This workshop brings together scholars of different disciplines to reflect on where we are now and how we got here. Further, remembering the 80th anniversary of the Second World War, we will ask what that means for the Europe of the future and its relations with regions of the world.

Working Pattern

To ensure deeper conversations, all panellists will be asked to send 2 pages minimum, 4 pages maximum sketching out their contribution to the panel at least one week in advance. This will be circulated to all workshop participants, with a request for all panellists to ensure they have read all the contributions on their panel in advance of the workshop. ¹

Panellists will then be asked to take 2 minutes only to deliver the headline arguments before the panel moderator opens the wider conversation. Panel moderators will be asked to facilitate conversations by making connections, perhaps provocations, seeking clarification etc, ensuring that panellists remain focused on the period under discussion. Panellists are selected for their individual disciplinary expertise that forms one part of the larger puzzle(s).

¹ At the workshop, we will discuss the possibility/utility of developing these for submission to a journal for a special issue, e.g. *Europe-Asia Studies*, *JCMS*.

09.00 – 09.30 Coffee and Welcoming Remarks

09.30 - 11.00 Panel 1: The Build-up to War and War in Europe

While we are largely focused on 1945 as the anniversary moment, this panel is necessary in order to provide context for the 1945 “moment” and the years that followed. Contributions here include work on the road to world war, decolonisation movements, the League of Nations. The inter-war period will be considered particularly for how it set in train Cold War dynamics and divisions.

Moderator: Dr Laurien Crump, Centre for Parliamentary History, Radboud University, Nijmegen

- Dr Joost Augusteijn, Institute for History, Leiden University
- Dr Ferenc Laczó, Maastricht University
- Dr Anne-Isabelle Richard, Institute for History, Leiden University
- Dr Ota Konrad, Charles University, Prague, Czechia

11.30 - 13.30 Panel 2: 1945-1989: Building a New World Order amid the Cold War

This panel will take stock of the immediate post-War period up to the late Cold War. Panellists will consider the (selective) role of ideas and imagining, as well as the myths that feature in discourse about the immediate post-war years. European integration and the building of Liberal institutions will be the focus of discussion, as well as other international organisations and the space left for “new” states to articulate their own visions. With the benefit of hindsight, consideration will also be given to the failures of the early post-1945 world order and the challenges of the late Cold War. Trade, gender and welfare issues will be central to discussions here.

Moderator: Dr Matt Broad, Institute for History, Leiden University & Cold War Network

- Dr Alexandre Afonso, Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University
- Dr Laurien Crump, Centre for Parliamentary History, Radboud University, Nijmegen
- Professor Roberta Guerrina, Bristol University and College of Europe – Where are the Women
- Dr Brian Shaev, Institute for History, Leiden University
- Dr Haris Dajč , Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland for MA EPS

Lunch Break

14.30 - 16.00 The Post-Cold War Period

Discussions here will focus particularly on newly liberated states, integration processes and their limits, on conflict, including the role of trade in driving both cooperation and conflict. Here too, the breakdown of the post-1945 agreements, especially relating to nuclear deterrence and proliferation, will be explored.

Moderator: Dr Vera Scepanovic, Institute for History, Leiden University

- Dr Andreas Hofmann, Institute for History, Leiden University
- Dr Simeon Paravantes, Utrecht University
- Dr Jack Thompson, University of Amsterdam

Break

16.30 - 17.45 Workshop Conclusions – Where Are We Now?

- Dr Maxine David, Institute for History, Leiden University
- Dr Daniel Schade, Institute for History, Leiden University

18.30 Dinner for all paper-givers

Venue TBC