

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Faculty of History and Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University St. Kliment Okhridski

Under the patronage of Prof. D. Hist. Sci. Ivan Ilchev – Rector of Sofia University

And with the support of the WAZ media group – Germany

Organize an international conference

### **„Political Mythology and Historical Science”**

**2-4 April 2009, Sofia**

The theme of political mythology and the use of history in politics is serious and up-to-date enough to be the topic of an international interdisciplinary conference moreover taking into account the fact that in Bulgaria it has been dealt with in a sporadic and fragmentary fashion linked with some specific concrete occasions. At the same time that topic is essential in approaching existing problems in social science in general and in History – in particular. Firstly, it touches upon the issue of the professional academic research on one side and the historical simulation of political problems on the other. Historical arguments are actively used by some politicians in order to gain some socio-political legitimacy, by media – probably to gain additional circulation and by thousands of Bulgarians in Internet forums and chat groups that voice their opinion on various items, linked with history. It is exactly the web which explicitly demonstrates in practice the newly acquired abilities of the so-called “ordinary citizen” to find a field of acknowledgement in social life and to interpret political mythology. Thus the creation and existence of history within the space of media with its unavoidable elements of popularization and prophanity is another topic that is worthy of a professional discussion. The problem, which is last but not in its significance is the lack of a “dialogue” within Bulgarian historical science and between historians and non-historians in the major research centers and in social science in general.

This international academic conference dedicated to political myths and history is seen as a forum that will lead to the creation of a more dialogic environment in Bulgarian social science and to a more thorough analysis of such complex social phenomena as political myths.

This call for papers is targeted at historians, philosophers, political scientists, cultural studies experts, art historians, journalists so that political mythology to be covered in its

various representations and relevance to other phenomena as nationalism, political culture, religion, civil rituals, cults, stereotypes etc.

Thematic accents:

**1. The notion of political myths.** Political, historical and national myths. Are political myths constructions made in the field of politics only, or are there other types of myths such as myths with historical content and origin, everyday life myths, literary and artistic ones that have been already made instrumental through politics? Is there any difference between myths of some fictitious event and a political myth, originating from a real event that has become “sacred” thus gaining a momentum mobilizing and strengthening its existence? How are political myths created? Is political mythology a specific phenomenon of the ideological practice of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and under which circumstances was that practice activated?

**2. History and political mythology.** The role of professional historians in political myth-making. Political mythology and historical methodology: how do the changes in research methods in history affect the attitude toward political mythology and its search for legitimacy through the study of the past? How does the reconstruction and deconstruction of history reflect upon the dynamics of political myths? Political mythology in history textbooks: what is the role of the textbooks selection and approval procedures and the requirements of educational institutions to textbook authors?

**3. Politics and political mythology.** What is the place of politicians in the usage of political mythology, how do they use and renovate political myths, shaping them for their own goals? The manipulative use of political myths and why are they necessary? The myths of the Cold War. Political rituals and “civil religion” (P. Бела). The genesis of modern political rituals and their roots in the past (anniversaries, jubilees etc.), the elaboration of those rituals, their political appeals and the changes of old rituals with new ones.

**4. Political mythology and media.** The myth-making functions of the media. How is it carried out in the different types of media (television, radio, newspapers, internet)? The role of the media in circulating or criticizing political myths. The media struggling between public the public mission and the political order, between professional standards and the market, between nationalism and multiculturalism. National stereotypes and cliches in the internet forums, discussing elements of popular culture such as sport, cinema and music.

**5. Art and political myths.** Political mythology and literature, visual arts and cinema. The arts between professional benchmarks and propaganda – past and present. Does art derive political and historical myth-making or vice versa – the latter serve art (especially in cinema) and its professional and market interests?

Please send the paper proposals for presentations (max. 1 page) to both Associate Professor Kostadin Grozev [kgrozev@gmail.com](mailto:kgrozev@gmail.com) and Associate Professor Daniela Koleva [daniela@sclg.uni-sofia.bg](mailto:daniela@sclg.uni-sofia.bg) . Deadline: 31 October 2008. Working languages of the conference: Bulgarian and English. Translation will be provided into the working languages..

Advisory Committee:

Prof. D. Hist. Sci. Ivan Ilchev, chairman

Prof. Lutz Niethammer

Prof. Stefan Troebst

Prof. D. Phil. Sci. Ivaylo Znepolsky

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Plamen Mitev