

# CALL for PAPERS

## Sacralization of History: Actors – Networks – Topics in (contemporary) Eastern Europe

**International and interdisciplinary conference organized by the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”, Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe, and the Leibniz Institute of European History in cooperation with and with financial support from the Leibniz-Research Alliance “Historical Authenticity”**

**December 10-12, 2020, in Marburg (Herder Institute)**

Historical memory is playing a central role, especially in Eastern European, in shaping national identities and legitimizing claims to leadership. Remarkably, history is currently not simply politicized but history is also being sacralized. Historical evidence, myths and stereotypes are declared “authentic” and therefore beyond doubt or criticism. Secular and sacral rituals, venerated objects and marked spaces are used to strengthen feelings of national identity and belonging. Religious authorities and churches are often involved in the sacralization of historical politics. Populist parties and regimes also make use of history in this manner.

The conference will explore the sacralization of history with a focus on Eastern Europe. Here, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the erasure of Soviet traditions and interpretations of history have enabled or made politicians and societies to search or rediscover a connection to their “own usable past.” In addition to the Russian Federation and Ukraine, there is currently an intensive public engagement, for example, with history in the Baltic states, Poland and Hungary, and in the Balkans. Yet, the politics of historical memory is also experiencing a boom in Western Europe, particularly in countries such as Germany and other member states of the European Union, where populist parties have emerged. The conference will therefore explore the following topics from a comparative perspective:

- › Who are the political and societal actors promoting the sacralization of history?
- › What role do church actors play in this process? Are there differences between the various churches and denominations? If so, how can this be explained?
- › How is legislation used? Are the courts invoked in the process?
- › Which networks within countries or internationally promote sacralized visions of history? Are they political networks or are they based on religious connections?
- › Who is excluded from the sacralized community of national belonging?
- › Which historical topics seem best suited for the sacralization of history?
- › Which periods, figures of the national past are revived in the process? Which are neglected?

- ) What happens to the rituals, objects or spaces formerly regarded as special or sacral? Are they profaned, neglected or re-inscribed by new national histories?
- ) Is there a religious language of national history? Does the sacralization of history affect religious practice and ideas?

Conditional on travel and contact regulations (due to the Corona pandemic), the organizers will invite 15-20 scholars. A substantial contribution to travel and accommodation costs will be available.

The organizers are planning to publish selected papers of the conference in a peer-reviewed volume or journal issue.

A proposal of maximum 300 words and a short biography with a list of (selected) publications and areas of research should be submitted in a word (docx) document by 20th July 2020 to:  
**forum@herder-institut.de**

For questions regarding the conception of the conference:

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