

DATE

June 9-10, 2011

CONFERENCE VENUE

*Estonian Academy of Sciences,
Tallinn, Estonia*

CONFERENCE LANGUAGES

English, Estonian

ORGANIZERS

*The Estonian Institute of Historical
Memory (www.mnemosyne.ee)
and the Unitas Foundation
(www.unitasfoundation.org).*

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Call for Papers

**Shaping of Identity and Personality during Communist Rule:
History in the Service of the Totalitarian Regimes in Eastern Europe**

The aim of totalitarian regimes was the radical transformation of personalities and of the identity of their subjects into a new ideological form. During the second half of the 20th century, the image of the identity of all communist regimes included official treatments of history based on Soviet-style outlines and created under the control of the ruling single party. Official history was supposed to establish the conviction that the regime was born according to the will of the broad masses and is thus legitimate from the beginning and forever. The narrative of the Great Patriotic War waged against “fascist Germany and imperialist Japan” played a major role in forming the post-war identity of “Soviet people”. Winning the war and driving German forces out of Eastern Europe established the Eastern Bloc controlled by the Soviet Union, in other words the so-called socialist friendship alliance. Winning the war and the tens of millions of human lives sacrificed for that victory seemingly justified the aspirations of the Soviet Union to participate in a leading role in reorganising the post-war world. Artificially created official history and the new historical identity that this history forced upon the population required the establishment of a single infallible truth through half-truths and outright lies, keeping silent about events that had actually taken place and people that had actually lived.



This was not an ironbound concept. The official treatment of history changed constantly depending on changes in leadership, first and foremost in the Soviet Union but also in other Eastern Bloc countries, as well as on relations with other world powers but also with Third World countries. George Orwell's book *1984*, published in 1948, contained an entirely faithful description of the constant rewriting of history that had already taken place by his time and continued to take place until the collapse of the Eastern Bloc.

The aim of this upcoming international academic conference is the detailed yet at the same time general description, analysis and explanation of state policy and actions implemented in Eastern Europe aimed at forming a communist identity and personality based on the official treatments of history of the former Eastern Bloc countries. Associations between the violation of human rights and compulsory shaping of identity will also be examined. We will attempt to appraise the effectiveness of the reshaping of identities and determine the more influential historical fabrications that have carried over into the international discussion of the beginning of the 21st century. Alongside the shaping of identity by the state, we are also interested in other co-factors that shaped official identity, yet also in circumstances that counteracted the shaping of official identity. We consider it important to compare and juxtapose what took place in different countries with treatments that were widespread during the Cold War and later in the West. Interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approaches are welcome. One means of disseminating the conference is also to make the more interesting presentations available to a broader audience through public presentations.

WE INVITE PAPERS WITH TOPICS RELEVANT TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING PANELS

(the working titles are listed below):

- 1) Policy, methods and means for shaping communist identity and personality;**
- 2) The official version of the history of the establishment of communist regimes “according to the will of the people”;**
- 3) The alteration of the narrative of the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War in the latter half of the 20th century and its application in the shaping of identity and personality;**
- 4) Present day consequences and influences of the shaping of communist identity and personality.**

The application relevant to the subject of the conference may be written in English, should consist of no more than 500 words and be accompanied by a brief academic CV. Please indicate for which panel the abstract is intended. Each panel will ultimately have 3–4 panelists.

Applications should be sent to the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory by e-mail conference@mnemosyne.ee or by mail: Tõnismägi 16, 10119 Tallinn, Estonia.

The deadline for applications is 15 January 2011. Successful applicants will be informed of the acceptance of their proposal by 1 February 2011.

A selection of papers will be published as an academic publication.

The organisers will provide speakers with compensation for travel expenses, accommodations and meals as well as fees for publication.

In addition, we hereby announce a call for participants in the conference to interested university students studying in degree programmes. Please send a brief CV and a letter of motivation to the address listed above so that we can decide the compensation of accommodations expenses.

For further questions please contact conference@mnemosyne.ee

The University of Tartu through its International Summer University invites students from universities and higher education establishments, journalists, civil society representatives, opinion leaders, etc throughout the world to participate in the summer course offered in conjunction with the conference. Participants of the Summer University program will attend the conference as part of the academic program and will be offered additional coursework prior and after the conference program. Some of the key speakers will also teach in the academic program. The University of Tartu will award to the student 3 ECTS credits for participants of the summer program, provided that they have passed the course requirements. A limited amount of bursaries for participating at the summer course will be issued by the Unitas Foundation.

Please send CV and motivational letter to info@unitasfoundation.org.

For additional information please access www.isu.ut.ee.