



International Conference
“Restoration of History: Politics of Memory in East-Central Europe”
3-4 May 2013, Minsk (Belarus)

Organizers and partners:

Political Sphere Institute (Belarus), Institute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Lithuania), Instytut Polski (Minsk, Belarus), Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), Institute for Social Studies at the University of Warsaw (Poland), Lithuanian Institute of History (Vilnius, Lithuania).

Working languages of the conference – Belarusian, Russian, English, Polish.

Estimated number of participants – 40 people.

Already confirmed their participation: Egidijus Aleksandravičius (Lithuania), Boris Dubin (Russia), Rasa Čepaitienė (Lithuania), Alieh Dziarnovič (Belarus), Rūstis Kamuntavicius (Lithuania), Andrej Kazakevič (Belarus), Alieš Kraūcevič (Belarus), Aliaksej Lastoŭski (Belarus), Dangiras Mačiulis (Lithuania), Waldemar Rezmer (Poland), Alieš Smaliančuk (Belarus), Darius Staliūnas (Lithuania), Andrzej Szpociński (Poland), Dariusz Szpoper (Poland), Jan Szumski (Poland), Tomasz Zarycki (Poland), Leonid Zashkilniak (Ukraine) etc.

Concept note:

Soviet Union seemed to be a giant repressive Empire, yet its collapse proved that a variety of nations, languages, cultures and histories hid behind its massive shadow.

New states of East-Central Europe instantly faced difficult problems of geopolitical choice and social and economic transformations. After the first stage of transition, however, new issues emerged that also appeared painful and hard to resolve:

How should nation-state look like? How should we formulate criteria for belonging to the nation? What should cultural memory look like? How should we build relations with minorities? And what is the basis for relations with neighbours – historical grievances, traditions of common political existence or economic interests?

These questions do not have a definite answer and give birth to plenty of intellectual projects, discussions and collisions. Moreover, it becomes obvious that politicians increasingly use painful issues of memory and identity in their interests. Of course, this does not facilitate understanding neither inside the country nor among the neighbours.

Geographically, Belarus got in the thick of “memory wars”, but actually, in their periphery. Conservation of political regime and policy of isolation of the country leads to a situation where the questions of complex and traumatic past do not appear in public discussion.

Meanwhile, redefining and rethinking of common past in different states (Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Russian Empire, Soviet Union) became especially important in current discussions on politics of memory. This involves not only assertion of one's piece of common heritage (Belarus is an obvious loser here), but also production of the concept of past that will ensure harmonious relations among nation states.

Hence, we think it is essential to return Belarus to the focus of discussion on politics of memory, to introduce Belarusian scholars to international process of interpretation of complex past, to construct nationally-centered version of cultural past which though will not cause new conflicts and hostility. To achieve this, we need to facilitate dialogue and discussion between Belarusian scholars and researchers and intellectuals from across the region.

The conference seeks to create a ground for interaction of academic and expert communities of the region for deeper understanding and research of politics of memory in Eastern Europe.

The aim of the conference is to analyze main strategies of implementation of historical policy in East-Central Europe, to explore peculiar and common elements of work with the past, to explore interconnections of politics of memory with a wider context of political and cultural transformations in post-communist countries.

Three main themes are offered for discussion at the conference, which we consider most important for understanding of common cultural and historical heritage of the region:

1. Common past or autonomous national histories? Memory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the countries of East-Central Europe.
2. Kastuś Kalinoŭski and the uprising of 1863: conflict of interpretations after 150 years.
3. Communist past: between overcoming and restoration in post-communist countries.

Technical details:

To apply for participation in the International Conference, please submit:

- 1) CV in any working language
- 2) Short text of your presentation, 2000-3000 characters in any working language
- 3) In your letter, please indicate whether you need visa support

Email for application: [info @ palityka.org](mailto:info@palityka.org)

Deadline: 3 March 2013

Organizers will request free visas for participants.

In special cases, reimbursement of travel and living expenses can be considered.