

It is my pleasure to invite you official to take part in the conference "Centers and Peripheries of European consciousness, from the 15th to the 20th Century". The conference will be held on September 24-26, 2009 in Moscow in the German Historical Institute Moscow (DHI Moscow). I would be most happy if you would be prepared to give a paper at the conference.

The concept of the conference:

After the Renaissance, new centers developed in Europe: political centers, religious centers, cultural centers, and many others besides. The ethos of the Renaissance shattered the universal worldview, forcing a redefinition of the boundaries between historical epochs in European history. Henceforth, emerging nations perceived themselves as autonomous, even autochthonous entities. Individual centers and peripheries developed within the different nations, with each nation shaped by its common historical memory. We wish to examine how and to what extent such communities or individuals saw themselves as part of a "common European program", how such centers and peripheries were institutionalized in the imagination of Europeans. Are such images of the center and of the periphery directly linked to national consciousness? How are the perceptions of Europeans to be evaluated with regard to the intellectual and mental priorities ("centers" and "peripheries") of the epochs in which they lived? How deeply are these ideas, movements, European identities, the civil state, etc., rooted in history? Are historically established European ideas regarding apparently clearly localized centers and peripheries consistent with the current state of research?

Thus, this will be a conference on the history of ideas - and an invitation to a round-table discussion.

As historians, we continually strive to construct lines of continuity through history, according to what is currently important for us. But our approach must be rectified by an examination of the priorities of the respective epoch. Historians are moreover ever less inclined to keep epochs in view. Instead they prefer to find answers to concrete questions but without asking the important ones. But such questions remain relevant.

For the organizers of this conference, the conference is thus programmatic: In which direction are we moving in our study of European history, of which Russian history also forms a part.

Four panels are planned:

1st panel: The end of universalism and the birth of nations

2nd panel: Enlightenment in Europe

3rd panel: In search of a civil society

4th panel: Man as a prisoner of ideology

Each panel will consist of up to 6 papers.

The structure of the conference is that individual colleagues will be charged with overseeing specific panels and selecting the presenters in their panels. The individual heads of the panels are therefore also largely responsible for the selection of the topics of the papers to be presented. In this way the organizers of the conference also ensure the round table's "autonomy".

We expect all participants to take part in the discussions in all of the sections. Simultaneous translations will be provided.

Presentations should not exceed 25-30 minutes. Conference languages are German and Russian, English and French.

Articles will be published in the series of the DHI.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I will additionally inform you later, which colleagues have agreed to participate in the conference.

Thereupon I would like to emphasize that German Historical Institute takes upon itself all your disbursement on the journey and stay in Moscow during the conference. Namely, the Institute will pay your air ticket (economic class) here and back, residence in the hotel (usually it is a well-known one like "Warszawa" or "Akademicheskaja" which are not far from the Institute) for 4 nights, from 23/24 to 26/27 of September 2009, and meals during the conference. Our institute will provide transfer from the airport to the hotel and backwards. Further, we will compensate your expenses connected with the receipt of Russian visa.

In order that we could prepare an official invitation for you in time we ask you to send us the copy of your passport and necessary information. You shall get the Invitation in the name of Ministry of Science and Education RF to which we are accredited. With the received certificate of invitation then you need to address to the nearest RF Consulate. On arrival all your disbursement on consular fees will be compensated.

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