**STATE-SPONSORED HISTORIES AND HISTORIOGRAPHIC AUTHORITY**

**1st Conference of the Laboratory for Philosophy and Theory of History, YSU**

Yerevan (Armenia), 12-13 June 2025

**The Laboratory for Philosophy and Theory of History** is pleased to announce that its first conference is scheduled to take place on 12 and 13 June 2025, hosted by Yerevan State University. The event aims to bring together philosophers and theorists of history, historians, sociologists, as well as other specialists from around the world, and foster the exchange of ideas, questions, and resources. The overarching theme is state-sponsored history. The conference will serve as a platform for examining how states construct, enforce, and challenge historical narratives.

The conference aims to explore how states have historically influenced and continue to shape historiography and public memory. State-sponsored history, as understood in contemporary scholarship, extends far beyond official narratives crafted by governments. It encompasses a wide range of state-led and state-supported interventions, from laws governing memory to education curricula, from the creation of monuments and museums to the funding of academic research and archival institutions. At times, this influence includes state-sponsored violence, where acts of repression, war, or genocide are covered up or even justified by state-driven historiographies.

In these contexts, finding a historiographical language to resist such distortions is vital – not only to safeguard historical truth but also to uphold ethical standards in representing the past. Another critical aspect of state sponsorship is the marginalization of structures outside the state, such as the diaspora, which often finds its narratives excluded from official histories. Diaspora communities frequently preserve alternative memories and narratives that may conflict with state narratives, highlighting the need to address them within a shared and inclusive framework.

In recent decades, the advent of digital media and globalization has transformed the language and structure of historiography. The traditional top-down model of state-controlled archives and narratives is increasingly disrupted by the democratization of information, as archives and sources become globally accessible. This shift opens the door for a new, pluralistic historiography, where diverse voices and perspectives can challenge centralized authority and contribute to a more inclusive understanding of history.

Philosophical emphasis on dialogue and pluralism is key to fostering a historiography that is inclusive, diverse, and resistant to the politicization of historical discourse. In this way, philosophy not only supports critical reflection on the past but also guides the development of a more responsible approach to the future of historical inquiry. By engaging these themes, the conference seeks to illustrate the intersections of power, memory, and ethics, offering new pathways for critical thought and collaborative research.

**The conference proposes the following guiding questions:**

* What mechanisms do states use to establish and enforce historiographic authority?
* How do official histories shape collective identities?
* In what ways do diasporas challenge or complement state-sponsored narratives?
* What role do historians play in resisting state-controlled narratives?
* How are state-sponsored histories affected by global trends?
* How do post-colonial states reclaim their histories from colonial narratives?
* How is state-sponsored violence justified or concealed through historical narratives?
* How do states use public spaces and education to institutionalize specific memories?
* What role does international law play in framing and addressing state-sponsored atrocities?
* In what ways does historiography uncover or obscure ideological motivations behind state violence?

**In this sense, the conference welcomes contributions on relevant topics, including (but not limited to):**

* Historiographic Authority and State Narratives
* State, Diaspora, and Competing Historical Narratives
* History, Ideology, and Power
* Repression and Resistance in Historiography
* State Historiography and Globalization
* Post-Colonial Histories and the State
* State-Sponsored Violence
* Memory Politics and the Public Sphere
* Nationalism and Historical Narrative Constructions

**Confirmed keynote speakers:**

Berber Bevernage (Ghent University, Belgium)

Marie-Gabrielle Verbergt (Ghent University, Belgium)

Marc Nichanian (Emeritus Professor, Columbia University, USA)

**Academic members responsible for the conference:**

Kalle Pihlainen (PI of the Laboratory for Philosophy and Theory of History)

Valentina Calzolari (PI of the Laboratory for Philosophy and Theory of History)

Davit Mosinyan (CI of the Laboratory for Philosophy and Theory of History)

Silva Petrosyan (Member of the Laboratory for Philosophy and Theory of History)

Smbat Hovhannisyan (Member of the Laboratory for Philosophy and Theory of History)

Mariam Karapetyan (Member of the Laboratory for Philosophy and Theory of History)

**Submission Guidelines:**

Those interested in taking part in the conference are invited to send in an abstract of 300-500 words (in .doc or .docx) to lab.philosophy@ysu.am by **15 March 2025**. Please name your file following this structure: Surname\_Title of the abstract. Accepted participants will be notified by **mid-April**.

Papers must be presented either in **Armenian** or in **English** (there will be simultaneous translation). Participation in the conference is **free** of charge.

Please address any questions to the conference organisers at: lab.philosophy@ysu.am