

**Call for papers for a conference on
THE PERSONALITY CULTS OF MODERN DICTATORS**

Institute for Germanic and Romance Studies, University of London
22-23 October 2010

Almost all modern dictators are the subject of personality cults that are highly organised even if they often also rest on spontaneous contributions. By creating a narrative of exceptionality around an individual they harness support and help consolidate a regime. The forms cults take depend on national traditions and histories, patterns of gender relations, and the existence or otherwise of an articulated civil society. In this sense, they are cultural as much as political phenomena. The highly specific nature of each cult means that comparative work is rare. The aim of this conference is to compare different aspects of many cults of personality, and, by so doing, raise new hypotheses of research and lay the foundations for new potential interdisciplinary collaborations.

Keynote addresses will be delivered on some of the key precursors of twentieth century dictators: Maria Wyke (UCL) on Julius Caesar and his legacies, Sudhir Hazareesingh (Balliol College, Oxford) on the legend of Napoleon, and Lucy Riall (Birkbeck College, London) on Garibaldi.

This conference will be held as the final event of the AHRC research project 'The Cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians 1918 - 2005'.

Among the themes that will be explored at the conference are the following:

- Dictators and their publics
- Dictators, architecture and the visual arts
- Dictators and the mass media
- Life and death narratives of dictators
- Dictators' bodies and private lives
- Masculinity and dictatorship
- Dictators and religion
- Dictators' costumes
- Dictators in popular memory
- Dictators in film and literature
- Dictators, power and constitutions

Proposals for papers of twenty minutes are invited on European, Central and South American, African, Middle Eastern, and Asian dictators. Contributions are welcomed from historians, political scientists, sociologists, specialists in film, literature, photography and the press, as well as scholars with an interest in gender, performance and leadership. Papers may treat aspects of one or more personality cults.

Proposals should be between 300 and 500 words long and should indicate the institution of the speaker and his or her academic position (eg. Professor, Lecturer, PhD candidate etc.).

Offers of papers should be sent by **1 June 2010** to one of the organisers:

Christopher Duggan (c.j.h.duggan@reading.ac.uk)

Stephen Gundle (s.gundle@warwick.ac.uk)

Giuliana Pieri (g.pieri@rhul.ac.uk)

Material from the AHRC project including documentary films will be presented in the course of the event.

The programme of the conference will be published in July 2010. The conference fee, payable by all speakers and attendees, will be £40 for one day and £70 for two days.