



## Conference Report

### **“Challenges, Concepts, Ideas during the Cold War of the 1970s & 1980s”**

**13. – 15.09.2013, Blaubeuren, Germany**

Conveners: Roman Krawielicki, Martin Deuerlein

This conference was organized by Project D04 "The USA and the Soviet Union: Transformations of a Global Competition, 1975-1989", which places special emphasis on analyzing both the Western and Eastern side of the conflict and resulting dynamics from respective interactions.

As Roman Krawielicki and Martin Deuerlein outlined in their welcoming remarks, in case of the Cold War of the 1970s and 1980s this means to connect current research on those decades as a time of transformation of international economic and social orders to the analysis of the "the Cold War". In many respects, the year 1983 was a nexus for such developments: It marked the culmination of tensions that had piled up with the demise of superpower détente, but at the same time it was a turning point towards a new rapprochement between East and West. Its 30th anniversary therefore provided an appropriate opportunity to discuss wider developments of the late Cold War.

The first two Panels then looked at the 1970s as a decade of uncertainty, but also of accelerating globalization and new ideas. In his keynote, VLADISLAV ZUBOK (London) explored causalities for the failure of détente and the Soviet collapse and highlighted the role of “enlightened apparatchiks” and a “consumerist shock” that most Soviet citizens encountered when they got a closer look of Western consumption.

Panels 3 and 4 also emphasized the role of experts and transnational actors in East and West, which included Sovietologists, East German economists, Soviet advisors in Afghanistan and “friendship societies”.

The second conference keynote was delivered by MARK KRAMER (Harvard University) who focused his remarks on developments in Eastern Europe between 1968 and 1981, i.e. from the Czechoslovak to the Polish crisis.

A special panel on the 1983 war scare and the so-called 'Able Archer' crisis featured two fascinating studies in contrast about the historical relevance of these events. While NATE JONES (National Security Archive, Washington D.C.) based on the still meager bulk of declassified U.S. records highlighted the then danger of an accidental nuclear war, MARK KRAMER (Harvard University) noted the conspicuous absence of a 1983 crisis throughout Soviet sources.

The following panel on the 1980s as a “Decade of Fear - Decade of Trust?” featured such diverse topics as antinuclear protests, the role of “trust” in the Reagan administration and Nicaragua’s Miskitu Indians as part of the “Fourth World Movement”. It thereby highlighted that neither this

decade nor the 1970s are appropriately described by superficial labels but instead provide ample material for a more differentiated analysis.

The final panel then linked historical analysis of the Cold War to present developments by addressing terrorism discourses during the Cold War. Then as well as now terrorism scares were and are “discursive constructions” that create a “hyperreality” that can be exploited by the intelligence community and other government agencies to pursue particular policies and secure institutional funding.

Der interdisziplinäre Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB) 923 „Bedrohte Ordnungen“ ist an die Universität Tübingen angeschlossen. Er untersucht soziale Gefüge in Situationen, in denen die bestehende Ordnung durch innere oder äußere Faktoren bedroht ist. Die WissenschaftlerInnen beforschen die Historisierung von Krisendiagnostiken sowie die Untersuchung von Modi des schnellen sozialen Wandels. Ihr Ziel ist die Etablierung neuer Raum- und Zeitkategorien in den Geisteswissenschaften. Der SFB 923 wird seit dem 1. Juli 2011 von der Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft für die Dauer von vier Jahren gefördert.