

Concept

The involvement of further parts of East-Central Europe in the soviet sphere of influence in the wake of WWII had far-reaching consequences for the economic relations both between East-Central European countries themselves and between the region and other parts of the world.

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA/ COMECON), founded in 1949, marked for four decades socialist countries' space of action both in an economic and geographical sense. Since its dissolution more than 20 years ago the CMEA became a research object in various branches of economic history. The historicisation of research on the CMEA and the progressive opening of new sources created novel perspectives and questions.

It therefore deserves consideration that, although the CMEA eventually proved to be a failed effort for a supra-national coordination of national planned economies, it was never simply reducible to a free trade zone. Indeed, it initiated and coordinated joint projects in large economic and infrastructural areas. Hence studying the range of bottom-up attempts at cooperation and integration offers new insights in the system and operation of command central planned economies.

Despite efforts at autarky both on the level of individual nations and the bloc at large, contacts with neutral and non-aligned states played an important role in CMEA countries' foreign trade relations as early as in the 1950s and 1960s. Changing global economic conditions in the 1970s brought about a revision of economic and political strategies in which relations with the "First" and "Third World" earned ever more significance.

Hosted by

Research group "East Central Europe Transnational" at the Leipzig Centre for the History and Culture of East Central Europe (GWZO)

Heads of Research group:

Prof. Dr. Frank Hadler (GWZO)

Prof. Dr. Matthias Middell (University of Leipzig)

in cooperation with

Fachkommission Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften im J.G. Herder-Forschungsrat
and

Centre for Interdisciplinary Polish Studies at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt/Oder (ZiP)



Conference Organizers

Dr. Dagmara Jajeśniak-Quast (ZiP/GWZO)

E-Mail: dagmara.jajesniak-quast@uni-leipzig.de

Dr. Uwe Müller (GWZO)

E-Mail: uwe.mueller@uni-leipzig.de

Venue

GWZO Leipzig, Specks Hof (Eingang A)
Reichstr. 4-6, D- 04109 Leipzig

GEFÖRDERT VOM



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

Front image:
Special series of postage stamps
„35 years Comecon“

GWZO

Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum
Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas
an der Universität Leipzig

Economic Entanglements in East-Central Europe and the Comecon's Position in the Global Economy (1949-1991)

Leipzig, 14-16 November, 2012



14 November, 2012

4:00 - 5:00 pm

Introduction

Chair: *Klaus Ziemer (Trier/Warsaw)*

Frank Hadler (Leipzig), Welcome address

Uwe Müller (Leipzig), East Central European Planned Economies in the Global Economy (1945-1990). State and tasks of research

5:00 - 5:30 pm Coffee break

5:30 - 7:45 pm

The Comecon. A Transnational Institution which Worked?

Simon Godard (Geneva), Internationalism as a vocation? Considerations on the working culture of CMEA-public servants

Erik Radisch (Bochum), Soviet Concepts of the Comecon (1956-1971)

Jan Lomíček (Prague), Czechoslovak participation in joint projects within the CMEA in the seventies and eighties of 20th century

8:00 pm Reception

15 November, 2012

9:00 - 10:30 am

Case Studies

Chair: *Zdenek Lukas (Vienna)*

Pál Germuska (Budapest), A Special Case of Branch-Cooperation. Military Industrial Collaboration in the Comecon

Mila Oiva (Turku), Competition and the Socialist Integration. – Contradictory Concepts?

10:30 - 11:00 am Coffee break

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Zsombor Bódy (Budapest), Semantic of Political Economy of the International Relations in the COMECON. The Example of the Hungarian Ikarus Buses (1957-1975)

Christian Mady (Bochum), Hungarian Foreign Trade Relations in the Automobile Industry

12:30 - 2:00 pm Lunch

2:00 - 4:15 pm

Relations between the West and the East

Chair: *Karl von Delhaes (Marburg)*

Mikhail Lipkin (Moscow), The Perception of West European Integration in the USSR

Angela Romano (London), Defensive and transformative: the European Community's policy towards the Comecon since the early 1970s

Suvi Kansikas (Helsinki), The CMEA and the EC Challenge (1969-1975)

4:15 - 4:45 pm Coffee break

4:45 - 6:15 pm

Johan Schot/Jira Janac (Eindhoven), Tensions concerning the Sovietization and the Europeanization of Railway Governance in East Central Europe

Peter Švík (Tartu/Bratislava), Reflections on General Trends in the East-West Trade of Civil Aviation Technology in the 1960s and 1970s

8:00 pm Dinner

16 November, 2012

9:00 - 10:30 am

The Comecon in the Global Economy

Chair: *Sebastian Kinder (Tübingen)*

Christian Gerlach (Bern), Reintegration into the Capitalist World Market? Grain Imports to East Europe in the 1970s and their Implications

Radek Soběhart (Prague), "Long Live General Muammar Gaddafi!" Czechoslovak-Libyan Relations (1974-1985). Reflections on the Global Cold War

10:30 - 11:00 am Coffee break

11:00 - 11:45 am

Martin Dangerfield (Wolverhampton), Post-Comecon Economic Relations of Former Soviet Bloc Countries and Russia: Continuities and Changes

11:45 am - 12:45 pm Lunch

12:45 pm - 2:15 pm

Conclusions

Chair: *Uwe Müller (Leipzig)*

Christoph Boyer (Salzburg), Concluding Comments

Dagmara Jajeśniak Quast (Leipzig/Frankfurt-Oder), Closing Remarks: The Multiple International Dimensions of the Comecon. New Interpretations of Old Phenomena