

The Two Germanies and Their Eastern Neighbor in the Late Cold War: German Responses to Poland's Solidarity Movement

Panels des Deutschen Historischen Instituts Warschau für die panel series „Germany and Its Eastern European Neighbours“, German Studies Association Meeting, Denver, Colorado, 3.-6. Oktober 2013

The emergence and later suppression of the Polish Solidarity movement, known outside of Poland as the “Polish crisis” of 1980-1982, was an event around which differing views of the Cold War, as well as of international politics and human rights more broadly, crystallized—both between the two Germanies as well as between them and their Eastern neighbor.

The Polish crisis, therefore, provides a case study allowing to integrate German-Polish relations into wider discussions on central themes of the recent historiography of the Cold War, of the rise of human rights, or on the social and cultural history of the crucial decade of the 1970s. In the past ten years, moreover, the Polish crisis has at times served as a backdrop for German-Polish arguments with regard to European responses to events in the post-Soviet space or the Middle East.

In reassessing German-Polish relations in the early 1980s, the contributions to the panel draw on ongoing or recently finished research projects. They move beyond a traditional focus on diplomacy embedding German responses to the Polish crisis in the cultural and social history of the 1970s instead; moreover, including voices from East and West, they have a transnational approach. Thus, the papers discuss how debates about the Cold War or the Eastern ‘other’ were integrated into discourses on both German (or Communist) identity as well as transatlantic and pan-European relations. Moreover, some light will be shed on the heterogeneous factors shaping German-Polish political neighborhood within the apparent Socialist ‘bloc’.

Chair: *N.N.*

Nationalist aggression or defense of Socialism? Reflections on the GDR leadership's tough stance on 'beleaguered' Poland, 1980-82

Jens Boysen, Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau

Navigating between Détente and Solidarity: Social Democrats and Labour Activists in West Germany and the Netherlands Confront the Polish crisis
Christie Miedeme, Duitsland-Instituut, Amsterdam

The Fall and Rise of “Totalitarianism”: Polish-German Debates on Human Rights, Communism, and Democracy in the 1980s

Robert Brier, Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau

Discussant: *Wanda Jarzqbek, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warszawa*