



## Research Center for East European Studies at the University of Bremen

More than 25 years ago, politicians and academics joined forces to establish in Bremen an interdisciplinary research centre along with an archive as a secure haven for East European dissidents' personal papers, their art and manuscripts as well as samizdat publications.

Since then, the archive of the Forschungsstelle Osteuropa (FSO, Research Center for East European Studies) has become a singular archive in Western Europe with a collection of more than 100.000 documents, photographs and artefacts stemming from Eastern European dissident and non-conformist groups. The Russian archive includes the personal archives of Lev Kopelev, Vladimir Maksimov, Boris Groys, Vladimir Voinovich, Chingiz Guseinov, Yuri Trifonov et al. The holdings from Middle Eastern Europe contain, among others, papers of Wojciech Turek and György Dalos, materials of the Polish *drugi obiegi*, Czech dissident photographs and rare samizdat publications. Smaller holdings from the GDR and communist Hungary complete the collection.

Besides a recently published archival guide, information on the FSO holdings can be accessed via the online database:  
<http://www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de/>

### Contact:

Forschungsstelle Osteuropa an der Universität Bremen  
Klagenfurter Straße 3  
D-28359 Bremen  
Germany  
[schattenberg@uni-bremen.de](mailto:schattenberg@uni-bremen.de)  
[mlehmann@uni-bremen.de](mailto:mlehmann@uni-bremen.de)  
<http://www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de/>



## *The End of the Soviet Union?* *Origins and Legacies of 1991*



Workshop  
Research Center for East European Studies  
at the University of Bremen  
19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May, 2011

Call for Papers





## ***The End of the Soviet Union? Origins and Legacies of 1991***

During the last two decades, the hitherto unimaginable collapse of the Soviet Union was seen both as a definite break with the Soviet past and the onset of a phase of 'transition' to a democratic future. From both Eastern and Western standpoints, the year 1991 appeared as a definite epochal border.

Almost a generation later, the Soviet hymn has made its way back into official state symbols glorifying Russia's Greatness akin to Soviet tradition, Soviet leaders are praised for their leadership and management skills, the loss of Soviet ideals is lamented in public and official discourse alike. Two decades after 'The End of History', the emphasis is placed on continuities rather than fissures – history is back and the clear delineation represented by '1991' seems to evaporate in the face of this renewed, if ambivalent affirmation of the Soviet past.

These new trends in Russia's post-(post-)Soviet self-representations raise questions as to the origins, legacies and transmutations of politics, social relations and cultural codes linked to the Soviet past. Scholars increasingly deal with the roots and determinants of a cultural system that seemingly exhausted itself in the 1970s, came under fire in the 1980s and disintegrated in 1991, but whose ruins are not only resurrected in new splendor, but matter to a larger portion of Russia's population today.

How can both collapse and the symbolic resurrection of the Soviet Union be understood across the time span of a generation? How did social networks and cultural codes make sense before and after 1991? How are and were politicians and party members, dissidents as well as conformists, young and old codependent on a system that was brought on by state socialism and transformed by both popular and official discourse? How could official party discourses be seized by nonconformists, how could they use it as a weapon against the state?

How come that "believers" turned into mere "performers" of everyday rituals of Soviet life? And how and for what ends did and do different groups envision the past, the present and the future?

The Research Center for East European Studies (FSE) invites historians, anthropologists, philologists as well as social scientists interested in these and related questions to an interdisciplinary workshop in May 2011. We welcome paper proposals for the following, but not necessarily exclusive, topics:

- **Chiefs and Clans. Personal Networks and Leadership**
- **Generations. Shared Pasts, Diverse Presents, Uncertain Futures**
- **Soviet Citizens Between Consent and Dissent**
- **Cultural Codes. The (Post)Soviet Empire of Signs**
- **Soviet Legacies. Between Memory and Everyday Life**

### **Format**

Paper proposals of approx. 500 words should be sent to [mlehmann@uni-bremen.de](mailto:mlehmann@uni-bremen.de) by April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The workshop will be based on papers of approx. 10.000-25.000 words to be distributed among active workshop participants in advance. At the workshop, every presenter has 15 minutes to summarize the main argument for discussion.

**Conference languages: English & Russian**  
**Deadline for paper proposals: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

