

## Call for Papers: Conference on “The 30th anniversary of the withdrawal of Soviet Forces from Germany. Background, Execution and Consequences”

The German Baltic port of Mukran, located near Sassnitz on the Island of Rügen, is currently at the centre of attention. The construction of an LNG terminal at Mukran has drawn public attention and protests. Interestingly, 30 years ago, Mukran was also in the spotlight when the Soviet forces were being withdrawn. The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Germany was a momentous event and the accompanying ceremonies in Berlin and elsewhere marked the end of an era.

Since 1945, approximately 500,000 Soviet soldiers and civilians were stationed in the Soviet Occupation Zone in Germany, which later became the German Democratic Republic (GDR). These forces were equipped with an extensive arsenal, including nuclear weapons. As the Soviet era in Germany ended, about half of the Soviet personnel stationed in Germany departed from the Baltic port, heading to Klaipeda in Lithuania. The remaining soldiers and civilians were sent back to the Soviet Union, a country that ceased to exist on 31 December 1991. The Soviet soldiers relocated to newly built barracks in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. These military personnel faced an unknown path as they integrated into the armed forces of the newly independent nations.

During the times of the Warsaw Pact, nobody had anticipated the sudden withdrawal of the Soviet army from Eastern and Central Europe. Many questions remain to be answered, such as:

- Which political decisions led to the eventual withdrawal?
- Technically, this was an unprecedented feat during peacetime, requiring extensive planning, transportation, and coordination, so how was it made possible?
- What was the role of the intelligence community during the withdrawal process?
- Why was the Baltic port of Mukran chosen as the strategic location for the withdrawal of troops?
- How did the dynamic instabilities and revolutionary process in Eastern Europe play into the process? And how was it possible to succeed under these circumstances?
- What was the significance of the redraw for the redesign of the security architecture of Central and Eastern Europe?
- And what are the long-term effects of the redraw, especially in Russia?

These are some of the main questions that historians and eyewitnesses grapple with at the upcoming conference titled “The 30th anniversary of the withdrawal of Soviet Forces from Germany. Background, Execution and Consequences”. This significant event will be hosted at the University of Greifswald from November 7-9, 2024.

The conference not only sheds light regional history, particularly Rügen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, but also integrates international perspectives. Participants will discuss the broader implications of this historical event in the Baltic Sea area and beyond.

Deadline for abstracts: July 1, 2024

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The conference is organized by the Chair for Nordic History, University of Greifswald, Max Weber Network Eastern Europe, Center for Cold War Studies at the University of Southern Denmark, and the Chair for Contemporary History at the University of Rostock.